

Hafa Adai!

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PSS to 'un-furlough' teachers

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**
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REPORTER

The Public School System is looking at lifting the furloughs for over 700 teachers as school year 2020-2021 approaches in preparation for the "new normal."



Ada

See PSS on **Page 4**

Muña frets over US decision to leave WHO

By **JUSTINE NAUTA**
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REPORTER

Esther Muña, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.'s chief executive officer, is concerned about the United States' decision to leave the World Health Organization, and how that will impact the CNMI, Guam, and the Micronesian re-



Muña

gion since they're all under the U.S. flag.

"That's sad news for us here, especially because of proximity of assistance when there's a need for help. We pick up the phone [and] they come here. ...It's very quick because they know how critical response is. ...So, it is a big impact

See **MUÑA** on **Page 4**

IPI eyes restricted account for payroll

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC is seeking the federal court's permission to be allowed to create a restricted account that is being seen as a means to solve the company's payroll issues.



Dotts

Attorney Michael Dotts informed the federal court yes-

See **IPI** on **Page 4**

Tang OK'd to handle PSS suit

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

CNMI Supreme Court Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro has allowed NMI Settlement

Fund trustee Joyce C. H. Tang to handle the lawsuit filed by the Public School System and Education

Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada against Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Finance Secretary David Atalig.

See **TANG** on **Page 4**

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:

- Red: Least safe
- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

AT A GLANCE

As of 6pm, July 8, 2020

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	303	4	307
Recovered	184	18	202
Active	96	4	100
Deaths	6*	0	6*
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested		16,374	

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	31	0	31
Active	1	0	1
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested		8,217**	

*Total includes a sailor from the USS Theodore Roosevelt.

**Total includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Health Care Corp.



BUSTED PIPE

A truck allegedly hit this pipe of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. in San Roque, causing the water to flow out like a spring. There was no immediate word if CUC has already fixed this leak.

KRIZEL TUAZON

INSIDE



BUSINESS

For over two decades now, Aqua Connections Inc. has been the go-to place for aquatic services.

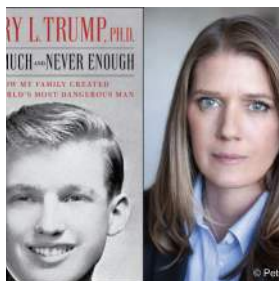
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WORLD

Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro said Tuesday he has tested positive for the coronavirus.

PAGE 13



LIFE & STYLE

President Donald Trump's niece offers a scathing portrayal of her uncle in a new book.

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Local

Judiciary OK with proposed \$4.3M budget



Chief Justice Alexandro Cruz Castro and other Judiciary officials appear before the House Ways and Means yesterday during a budget hearing on Capital Hill.

IVA MAURIN

By IVA MAURIN
iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Chief Justice Alexandro Cruz Castro appealed to lawmakers yesterday to approve the \$4.3-million budget the Office of the Governor is proposing for the Judiciary in fiscal year 2021.

That amount includes a \$900,000 increase from the original \$3.4-million proposal. The additional amount, according to special assistant for Management and Budget Virginia Villagomez, is intended to help the Judiciary bring back all their staff to 64 hours,

as well as an extra to pay for utilities.

While acknowledging that the proposal does not address each and every need of the Judiciary up until the end of this fiscal year, Castro said the Judiciary supports the governor's proposed budget, recognizing "three monsters" before the CNMI—the miscalculated projection of revenues, the economic downturn, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Speaking at the budget hearing for the Judiciary yesterday, Castro said that, even prior to the pandemic, the Judiciary has already been running on a

skeleton crew, which they had to trim further in their budget submission.

"Any further cuts through that budget submission... would trigger an event that I don't want to see and I believe all of us here don't want to see. That is, we're going to start cutting back all the judicial services on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota, and...close the doors of justice on Rota and Tinian, and then we [will] end up going back to the Trust Territory era," he said, referring to the time in the '70s when the CNMI was under the Trust

See JUDICIARY on Page 4

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This AD is paid for by Title VII-A Federal Grant under the DOE, OSERS.

Bautista: What's the next committee?

That was the question raised by the administration of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres in reaction to the creation of a new committee in the House of Representatives that is meant to look at the executive expenditures of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres.

Referencing previous committees the House had formed to look into the governor's spending, press secretary Kevin Bautista asked, "What's the next committee?"

"What's interesting about this new development from the Legislature was the fact that this committee is not taking on the work of the House Ways and Means Committee, the House Judiciary and Government Operations Committee, and the Office of the Public Auditor," said Bautista in an interview. "What's also interesting is the fact that the composition of the committee seems also implicitly very targeted, if we're going to be completely honest with you. At the end of the day, the administration [has] no luxury to play gotcha...politics."

House Speaker Blas Jonathan Attao (R-Saipan) created the House Special Committee on Fiscal Review of Executive Expenditures on Monday. This ad hoc committee is on top of another committee, the Special Committee on Federal Expenditures, that is also reviewing the administration's use of COVID-19 funds.

Bautista said that, in the midst of a pandemic and the economic shortfall the CNMI and the rest of the world are facing, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres does not have the same luxury as some in the Legislature "to play poli-

tics."

"We've been in full compliance with the Open Government Act. We haven't shied away from any of that. Any expenses that are related to their inquiries, they've been put in the same distribution to the members of Legislature for full disclosure, because we know public funds are something that needs to be properly accounted for, and the Department of Finance has done everything to show those documents and work with the Legislature," he said.

Is it politics?

With general elections coming in about four months in November, the administration is also questioning the particular makeup of the committee.

"We're not looking at it from the standpoint of party lines. We're talking from the standpoint of the composition being questioned, given who was on the committee, and who was driving a narrative to target the administration," Bautista said.

The new committee has a Republican chair and vice chair, two Republican members, two Democrat members, and two independents aligned with the Democratic Party. The Torres administration is Republican.

Attao earlier said in an interview that the formation of the committee is not a political move, and that the lawmakers are just "trying to do what's right."

"I've always said that ever since those first documents came in and ever since Rep. Tina [Sablan] and Rep. [Ed-



Bautista

win] Propst brought up these issues since last year, I told them that we're going to do things the right way. We shouldn't rush stuff like this. We should take our time, and make sure that we have all the proper information," Attao had

said. "I don't see any reason to do stuff for political reasons, no matter what the issue is, because at the end of the day, if we do it that way, we're going to make our people suffer. I don't want to put our people in that situation."

What's being investigated?

The oversight began last year, with the House minority bloc's formal submission of documents that included copies of government records related to travel, official representation, and reimbursement requests of the governor, in response to searches conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation at Torres' office and home at that time.

In an interview, Sablan said that the lawmakers are looking at potential abuse of funds related to reimbursements, as well as first-class travel, which according to Sablan, is explicitly prohibited in the law to be funded by the government.

"They really do require more investigation. On the minority's side, we've had the benefit of being able to review these records over the course of several months and so we are glad that the speaker has appointed this bipartisan committee," she said. "The secretary of Finance

has not fully complied with the Open Government Act and there are still pending records that we have not yet been able to attain, and now, as members of the special committees, we will be able to get those records and also calling people to testify," Sablan added, noting that the minority bloc has no subpoena powers to call in witnesses and call for records that have not yet been submitted.

Rep. Ralph Yumul (R-Saipan), who chairs the new committee, said that its establishment is a first since he got into office in 2012. An investigation was done on former governor Benigno R. Fitial, but for misconduct in public office.

"The committee's job is to investigate if there is waste. At the end of the day, we report to the

body and that's when the body decides what to do. But, it does give the opportunity for the administration to come in and justify each expenditure or receipts that they spent," he said.

At a radio news briefing yesterday, Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios stressed that it is within the Legislature's prerogative to

create any committee and that they are authorized to do so.

"At the end of the day, when we start the conversation and the discussions on this particular issue that they're going to look at, we do it in a civil manner and that the governor is not taken into the court of public opinion," he added. *(Iva Maurin)*

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Address: P.O. Box 501533
Saipan, MP 96950
Phone: 670-287-2013

Pro Se

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Melinda Rogolifoi
Petitioner,
FCD-GU-CIVIL ACTION
NO. 20-0125

ORDER SHORTENING TIME AND NOTICE OF HEARING

GOOD CAUSE APPEARING, It is hereby ordered that the time for notice of hearing for Petitioner(s) petition be shortened and that the hearing be set on July 13, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. in Courtroom A.

Dated this 1st day of July, 2020.

/s/ Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio

MUNICIPAL SCHOLARSHIP OFFICE

Municipality of Tinian and Auguigan
P.O. Box 520059 • San Jose Village • Tinian, MP 96952
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PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Tinian Municipal Scholarship Board hereby gives notice that there will be a Regular Meeting on Sunday, July 12, 2020 at 9:30 a.m., at the Tinian Public Library, San Jose Village Tinian.

AGENDA

- I. PRELIMINARY
 - A. Call to Order
 - B. Roll Call
 - C. Adoption of Agenda
 - D. Adoption of Minutes
- II. PUBLIC COMMENTS
- III. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. Budget 2021 Proposal
 - B. Organizational Chart
 - C. Programs
 - D. Status of Operations
 - 1.) Employees
 - 2.) Location
 - a.) Confidentiality
 - b.) Integrity
- IV. OLD BUSINESS
 - A. Letter of Assistance
 - B. Revision of TMS Regulations
 - C. Status of Compensation for Meetings
- V. SCHEDULE OF NEXT BOARD MEETING
- VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION
- VII. ADJOURNMENT

/s/Rodney S. Cabarles
Chairman

We ask that remarks be limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcomed to submit written comments on the day of the meeting. Pursuant to 1 CMC section 9912, the Board may vote to meet in executive session at any time. Individuals with special needs requiring special accommodations, please contact the TMSB office at least 48 hours prior to schedule meeting for assistance.

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For only \$50, enjoy a steak meal that includes maguro carpaccio with ravigote sauce for appetizer, miso soup, pickles, salad with Japanese dressing, four kinds of sautéed vegetables, a choice between a 120-gram beef tenderloin or a 150-gram beef sirloin with sautéed moyashi in sesame oil and enjoy it with a choice of steamed rice or Fiesta's original garlic rice.

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tree of scallops and salmon with Genghis Khan sauce and prawn in Provencal sauce, paired with a choice of steamed rice or Fiesta's original garlic rice.

The Steak and Seafood Combination goes for only \$75. Enjoy an appetizer of maguro carpaccio with ravigote sauce, miso soup, pickles, salad with Japanese dressing, four kinds of sautéed vegetables, a main entrée composed of scallops and salmon with Genghis Khan sauce and prawn in Provencal sauce and a 120g beef tenderloin or 150g beef sirloin with sautéed moyashi in sesame oil. Enjoy this with either steamed rice or Fiesta's original garlic rice.

For only \$95, go for the ultimate—Wagyu Beef and Seafood Combination, starting off with maguro carpaccio with ravigote sauce

for appetizer, miso soup, pickles, salad with Japanese dressing, four kinds of sautéed vegetables, a main entree include scallops and salmon with Genghis Khan sauce and prawn in Provencal sauce and a 150g Wagyu beef sirloin with three kinds of sauce and sautéed moyashi with sesame oil. It is never complete without steamed rice or Fiesta's original garlic rice.

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MAI Teppanyaki is open from 6pm to 9:30pm, from Tuesdays to Saturdays, with two seating schedules—one at 6pm and the next at 8pm. Reservations are needed. For more information and reservations, call Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan at (670)-234-6414. *(Bea Cabrera)*



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IPI

From Page 1

terday that IPI is now working on the paperwork for an order that, if U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona allows, will create the restricted account.

Dotts told *Saipan Tribune* that if Manglona agrees and the restricted account is allowed instead of the appeals bond, then no more writs of execution will be issued in the Pacific Rim Land Development LLC's lawsuit for now, and IPI will be able to continue with the construction of the hotel in Garapan.

At a status conference yesterday in Pacific Rim's lawsuit against IPI, U.S. Labor Secretary Eugene Scalia, through counsel Charles C. Song of the Office of the Solicitor, who appeared telephonically, told the court that he will not be making an appearance in the Pacific Rim case, but informed the court that there is a conflict in the consent judgment. According to the minutes of the hearing, Song said he will provide briefings to the court.

Last June 29, Scalia notified the court that the lawsuit filed by Pacific Rim against IPI is related to the court's consent judgment last year in the U.S. Labor's case against IPI.

Scalia, through Song, requested the court that any ruling the court enters in the Pacific Rim matter must ensure that IPI is able to comply with the court's April 11, 2019, injunction requiring IPI to comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act, including remedying missed payroll and meeting its payroll obligations going forward.

Song said that in the U.S. Labor secretary's lawsuit against IPI, the court entered the consent judgment

on April 11, 2019, which barred IPI from violating the FLSA.

At yesterday's status conference, Dotts, who appeared as a client representative for IPI, disclosed that the company's payroll 13 should arrive yesterday, Wednesday, and distributed that day. Dotts further informed the court that payroll 14 will arrive today, Thursday, and will be paid that same day. *Saipan Tribune* learned that the two payrolls' pay dates were June 19 and July 3.

Dotts said the restricted account will be treated like a bond. Dotts further stated that counsel will work on a stipulation as to the restricted account.

In response to *Saipan Tribune's* request for more details, Dotts said IPI was unable to distribute two payrolls because the court issued a writ of execution and all of IPI's money in its payroll account was taken. Dotts said this is something that can keep happening until Pacific Rim has collected the \$6.9-million judgment against IPI.

The lawyer explained that what IPI did was to contract with a third-party payroll service provider for them to write the payroll checks. He said IPI sent the payroll company the money for the payroll and the first batch of payroll checks arrived on Saipan yesterday, Wednesday, and were handed out yesterday.

Dotts said the second batch arrives today, Thursday, and will be handed out also today.

Dotts said the "restricted account" talked about at yesterday's conference is different from the payroll account.

He said IPI has already appealed the court's \$6.9-million judgment against IPI but this does not stop the other party from collecting on the

judgment. "To stop them from collecting, you are supposed to post a bond equal to the amount of the judgment. Then at the end of the appeal, if you lose, the bond pays the judgment," he said.

Dotts said these sorts of appeals bonds are not sold on Saipan, but IPI found an appeal bond it could buy in California. He said the price was at least \$34,000 and IPI had to deposit with the bonding company the full \$6.9 million.

Dotts said IPI proposed that it open a bank account on Saipan, put the \$6.9 million in the bank account, and have the court place "restrictions" on the account so that IPI could not take the money back out again.

With respect to Song's appearance at yesterday's conference, Dotts said that Song's reference to "conflicting" or "competing" was about last year's U.S. Labor's settlement judgment. He said IPI, under the judgment entered with U.S. Labor, is required to pay its employees on time. Dotts said that IPI's payroll account was emptied to pay the judgment held by Pacific Rim.

"If each time IPI puts money in its payroll account Pacific Rim takes it, IPI will not be able to pay its employees, and IPI will be violating the judgment with the Department of Labor," he said. The "restricted account"—if approved—will solve the problem.

At the Commonwealth Casino Commission's board meeting last June 25, IPI Treasury director Frances Mafnas and IPI human resources director Redie Dela Cruz disclosed that IPI has just engaged a new payroll service provider in Guam to address the payroll problem with IPI employees.

Hundreds of IPI construction workers recently held protests in

front of the District Court after they failed to get their two paychecks, allegedly because of the court's writ of execution that resulted in the seizure and closure of IPI's payroll account with the Bank of Saipan.

Pacific Rim counsel Colin Thompson informed the court yesterday that

attorney George Hasselback will be entering an appearance in this matter as counsel for IPI and will request for an extension of time to file an opposition to Pacific Rim's motion to dismiss IPI's counterclaims.

Manglona continued the status conference to July 15 at 9am.

MUÑA

From Page 1

for us in my opinion," said Muña.

A WHO team was recently on Saipan, helping with the emergency medical team.

WHO also assisted the CNMI during since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, such sending personal protective equipment to the CNMI and working with the Pacific Island Health Officers Association in getting the GenXpert supplies for testing, which Muña said was "troublesome" from the U.S. side.

There are other nonprofit global organizations that work with WHO in providing assistance, such as PI-HOA, United Nations Children's Fund, etc., Muña said.

Despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and a continuing spike in domestic cases, the United States formally signified its intent to withdraw from WHO last July 6. News reports say this will be effective on June 6, 2021.

Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios echoed Muña, saying he hopes that CHCC will be able to "fill in the gaps," should U.S. President Donald J. Trump not reverse his decision.

"I know [CHCC] works directly with [WHO], so hopefully things will change for the better. I'm sure that Esther is going to have to figure out where to fill in the gaps," said Palacios.

This decision for the United States to withdraw from the WHO "puts the health of the U.S. at a deep risk," according to a statement from the American Medical Association.

"The Trump administration's official withdrawal from the World Health Organization puts the health

of our country at grave risk. As the leading medical organization representing hundreds of thousands of physicians, we join in strong opposition to this decision, which is a major setback to science, public health, and global coordination efforts needed to defeat COVID-19," the AMA statement said.

It added that WHO plays a leading role in protecting, supporting, and promoting public health in the United States and around the world.

"The agency has been on the frontlines of every global child health challenge over the last seven decades, successfully eradicating smallpox, vaccinating billions against measles, and cutting preventable child deaths by more than half since 1990. Withdrawing from the WHO puts these investments at risk and leaves the United States without a seat at the table—at a time when our leadership is most desperately needed.

"As our nation and the rest of the world face a global health pandemic, a worldwide coordinated response is more vital than ever. This dangerous withdrawal not only impacts the global response against COVID-19, but also undermines efforts to address other major public health threats. The American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Family Physicians, American College of Physicians and American Medical Association strongly oppose this short-sighted decision.

"We call on Congress to reject the administration's withdrawal from the WHO and make every effort to preserve the United States' relationship with this valued global institution. Now is the time to invest in global health, rather than turn back," the statement added.

the two islands," and assured the Judiciary that they will try and help.

At the moment, Presiding Judge Roberto C. Naraja said that the managers and staff within the Judiciary are multitasking. Adoption cases are on hold because there is only one employee at the Family Court Division; one Probation Office is holding more than 100 cases, where the recommended is at 30 to 60 at the maximum; and 15 people are on the waitlist for the Drug Court Program.

"Any further cuts on our proposed submission will severely hamper the people's rights to access to justice, and may lead to the complete shutdown of our court services," he added.

The Judiciary has been venturing into electronic means to substitute for staffing, and recently expanded their e-filing to encompass criminal cases and small claims, among others.

Castro also asked the Legislature to give the Judiciary 100% reprogramming authority to provide it flexibility in addressing their internal needs and for the budget allocation to be made not monthly but quarterly.

PSS

From Page 1

According to Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada, the plan is to lift the furloughs for all the teachers so they can undergo training for remote learning.

"Most of our teachers have been furloughed. We have had a chance to collect and save money before the opening of schools so, right now, the plan is to bring back all of the teachers from kinder[garten] to [grade] 12 on Aug. 1. We will 'un-furlough' them and we will train them on remote learning," he said.

And with PSS looking at a mix of online and classroom learning, PSS will also have to lift the furlough on its bus drivers, Ada said, since they are essential in getting students to

and from schools.

Bus drivers will also need to be briefed on the new safety protocols when students get on and off school buses, with the COVID-19 pandemic still ongoing, he added.

As for on-ground personnel like maintenance and the campus administration, Ada would leave that decision up to the principals on whether to rehire them.

"For school-based personnel, we are asking the principals to [decide] as much as possible. Right now, only the vice principals, principals, and registrars are on campus as we [reopen] schools," he said.

Ada explained that all ground staff are paid through local funding and PSS has to be mindful about lifting furloughs for all these personnel because it could result in payless Fridays.

"We do need the maintenance and we do need the other secretaries and [administrative] assistants but those are all paid under local funding and the local accounts. We're really guarding it to make sure that when we bring everyone back, we do not experience a payless Friday," he said.

Additionally, since the upcoming school year will be a mix of both remote learning and face-to-face learning, there is a lesser need to have the same amount of ground staff as a regular school year when all the students are required to be on campus every day.

Ada said that PSS would make an exception for students whose parents would prefer to have their child attend school completely online, especially if the student is at high risk of contracting COVID-19 or has a family member who is at high risk.

Tiberius Mocanu, had opposed the Settlement Fund's intervention in the case, describing its concerns as "speculative." Mocanu had said he will file an amended complaint that will drop any language referencing the Settlement Fund so that it will not be part of the case.

Tang argued on the motion to intervene.

PSS and Ada are suing Torres and Atalig to guarantee for PSS an annual budget of not less than 25% of the Commonwealth's general revenue.

TANG

From Page 1

On Tuesday, Castro granted Tang's application to be admitted in the CNMI Judiciary for the purpose of handling the lawsuit. Castro ordered Tang, who is a Guam lawyer, to always be associated with a local lawyer. Tang has associated herself with CNMI lawyer Nicole M. Torres-Ripple, who, with her, is representing the Settlement Fund in PSS and Ada's lawsuit.

Last June 26, Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho granted the Settlement Fund's motion to intervene in the PSS lawsuit. Tang then applied to be temporarily authorized to practice law in the CNMI, where she is not formally admitted. Tang is a member of the Civile & Tang law firm in Guam; she is not a member of the CNMI Bar.

The next hearing in the case is on Aug. 28, 2020, on PSS' motion for summary judgment before Camacho.

PSS and Ada, through counsel

Apatang on furloughed staff: I would like to have everybody back

By IVA MAURIN

iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

In lobbying for a \$3.2-million budget next fiscal year, Saipan Mayor David Apatang said he would like to have all his furloughed staff back.

Speaking at the House Ways and Means' budget hearing last Tuesday, Apatang told lawmakers that he needs all his staff for his office's upcoming projects, as well as to continue other programs to benefit the community.

The Saipan Mayor's Office is asking to be allotted \$3.2 million in fiscal year 2021, which is \$1.8 million more than the \$1.4 million that Gov. Ralph DLG Torres is proposing for the office.

At the budget hearing Tuesday, Apatang said he understands the CNMI's current fiscal situation as impacted by the loss of tourism due to COVID-19 but he also underscored the need to maintain his office's operations, in terms of staffing and maintaining their equipment.

With projects in line for the year, particularly the Street

Naming and House Numbering System, the Saipan Mayor's Office would be needing a core number of individuals for its implementation, which include mapping, the 911 system and the data support system, he said. These are on top of the current projects that the office is implementing such as the beautification programs, junk clearing, and the animal shelter, among others.

With the help of the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation, the Saipan Mayor's Office was able to obtain equipment for its clearing operations, but would need funding for maintenance and parts.

"That is very important for us to continue to service our community here throughout the island, and work with the Marianas Visitors Authority also to clean up the tourist sites," Apatang said. "I would like to have everybody back but we have to wait and see 'til our economy goes back to normal."

Twenty-eight of the office's 71 staff were let go soon after the Office of the Governor cut everyone's 2020 budget by 48%, even before the COVID-19 pandemic hit. The Saipan Mayor's Office's budget officer, Terri Camacho, told lawmakers at the hearing that their office "does not have enough money to lead [them] all up to the end of the fiscal year with the general fund."

She added that 10 of their staff are under the general fund, 33 are funded by the CARES Act, and 28 were terminated. The work hours of the staff that remained have also been cut to 64 hours.

In the budget proposed by the governor, no funding was also allotted for the office's operations, according to Camacho. "Our operation budget is very critical because we use this budget for supplies, specifically for the tools and machineries that we have, and equipment, like our chainsaw. We need to get chains

for our bush cutters, and safety things for the staff."

Camacho added that the only thing provided for the mayor's office is their rental, communication, personnel

services at \$8,000, fuel at \$90,000, Official representation, and utilities. There is no budget for repair and maintenance of their vehicles and equipment.

"We try to stay within...

what we have in the general fund. ...I don't know if the mayor can live with this budget and do all his duties and respond to the needs of the community with nothing at all," she added.



Apatang



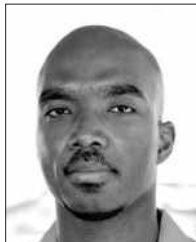
TINIAN TURNOVER

The Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 3 is taking over NMCB-5 on Tinian. Here, Jack Maggio, from Rochester, N.Y., and Brian Forcier, from Sheffield Lake, Ohio, both assigned to NMCB-3, inventory a tool kit for a relief in place/transfer of authority from NMCB-5.

U.S. NAVY/CONSTRUCTION
ELECTRICIAN CONSTRUCTION-
MAN MARCUS HENLEY

NMC grad passes NCLEX on first attempt

Frantz David Clarke, a Northern Marianas College nursing student who graduated this past May, has joined the list of students who has passed the challenging National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses or NCLEX-RN.



Clarke

"We are proud of David's accomplishment," said NMC interim president Frankie Eliptico.

The NCLEX-RN tests an individual's nursing knowledge, skills and abilities essential to the safe and effective practice of nursing at the entry level. The exam is used by nursing boards in all U.S. states and territories to award nursing licenses.

"We commend David for this accomplishment and expect to see great things from him as his educational and professional journey continues," said NMC Nursing Department chair Rosa T. Aldan. "Passing the NCLEX-RN and then being licensed as a Registered Nurse are great achievements."

Clarke is currently a registered respiratory therapist at the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. He pursued a nursing degree to further build his clinical skills, as well his knowledge and ability to provide comprehensive care.

"I've always wanted to be in a position in which I can reach out and help people when they

are most in need," Clarke said. He said that NMC prepared him well for the NCLEX-RN exam. "They emphasized the need to start preparing for the NCLEX on the first day of classes," Clarke said.

His advice for students preparing to take the exam is to use all

the resources available. "Develop a study routine where you review NCLEX content during your free time," Clarke said. "Even 20 minutes is enough time to review practice questions on your phone."

For more information about NMC's Nursing program, email Aldan at rosa.alan@marianas.edu or schedule a virtual appointment at rosa.alan@marianas.edu. (PR)

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP NO.: RFP20-BECQ/DEQ-087**

SUBMISSION DATE: AUGUST 03, 2020 TIME: 09:30 A.M.

**"GROUNDWATER MONITORING SAMPLING AND ANALYSIS
EVENT – FORMER W-2 SERVICES STATION FOR THE
BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL COASTAL QUALITY,
DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY"**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

A **PRE-PROPOSAL MEETING** IS SCHEDULED FOR **10:00 A.M., LOCAL TIME, JULY 20, 2020** AT THE 2ND FLOOR BECQ CONFERENCE ROOM (RM. 205).
****ALL ATTENDEES ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK AND EXERCISE SOCIAL DISTANCING FOR THE DURATION OF THE MEETING****

ALL QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP **MUST** BE SUBMITTED VIA-EMAIL TO MR. ROBERT DELEON GUERRERO BY EMAIL AT robertdlguerrero@becq.gov.mp, **NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS JULY 22, 2020**. RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL PERSPECTIVE PROPOSERS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ELI D. CABRERA
ADMINISTRATOR, BECQ

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S



NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514

Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp | Website: <http://www.nmhc.gov.net>
Tel Nos. 670-234-6866/234-9447/234-7670; Fax No: 670-234-9021

Notice for Public Comment

THE ANALYSIS OF IMPEDIMENTS TO FAIR HOUSING CHOICE REPORT

July 3, 2020

The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) would like to inform the general public that the Analysis of Impediments (AI) to Fair Housing Choice Draft Report is available for public review.

The Analysis of Impediments will be available for public review beginning July 3, 2020 to July 15, 2020. Due to protocols to mitigate the spread of CoVid19, the Analysis of Impediments will be available for review on NMHC's website at www.nmhc.gov.net (tab titled "CDBG"), Office of the Governor's website at www.gov.mp, and on NMHC's Facebook page.

A Virtual Public Hearing on the AI report will be held via Zoom teleconference and Facebook Live on July 10, 2020 at 10:00a.m. The meeting ID and password is posted on the NMHC website.

Written comments on the AI Report should be submitted no later than Wednesday, July 15, 2020, 4:30 p.m. to NMHC's offices in Saipan, Tinian, or Rota. You may also submit your comments via email at nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp or orally at the virtual hearing scheduled above.

If you may have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Ms. Tricia Tenorio, Planner at (670)234-6866/ or mobile (670)989-9448.

NMHC will make necessary arrangements for persons with disabilities. If you should require any special accommodations please contact our office (48) hours in advance.

/s/ Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

Study gives early warning of coral bleaching, starfish invasion

A new study by the Marine Laboratory at the University of Guam may help researchers predict coral bleaching months earlier than current tools, and, for the first time, may help predict invasion events of coral-eating crown-of-thorns starfish. The study was published on May 8 in *Scientific Reports*, a peer-reviewed journal published by Nature Research.

Coral bleaching and the crown-of-thorns starfish represent the two biggest disturbances coral reefs face, while local stressors like pollution and overfishing represent the two biggest impediments to recovery following disturbances.

Unlike other prediction tools, this study used the interaction of two major oceanographic modulators—El Niño and Pacific Decadal Oscillation, or PDO—to predict how “warm blobs” of seawater and excess nutrients move around the tropical Western Pacific to cause these two destructive events. Existing tools typically provide bleaching warnings two to three weeks in advance; however, this new tool extends the warning period to between three and five months.

Important implications
Advanced warnings have im-



UNIVERSITY OF GUAM
Lorenzo Stephan, a coral reef monitoring team member in Chuuk, holds one of many coral-eating crown-of-thorns starfish found during the El Niño–Southern Oscillation event of 2015–2017.

portant implications for coral reef management efforts in the Pacific region and potentially beyond.

“It takes management from a reactive position to a more proactive one,” said senior author Peter Houk, an as-

sociate professor of marine biology in the Marine Lab. “Not a lot can be accomplished with only a couple weeks’ notice, but predicting bleaching and starfish disturbance events a few months out may give governments and other agencies more time to acquire supplies, create legislation, and create support networks to ensure reefs are better equipped to handle these forces.”

An unanswered question
Above-average sea-surface temperatures are common across the tropical Pacific following El Niño Southern Oscillation events, which are increasingly exacerbated by climate change. However, islands—from Palau to Kosrae—can be affected differently. One may bleach, while another experiences little to none.

That question motivated researchers to study the impact of El Niño interacting with the PDO. Together, the two patterns predict maximum sea-surface temperatures and also the movement of “nutrient plumes” filled with what is known as “chlorophyll a” around the Pacific Ocean that attract plankton and cause the crown-of-thorns starfish outbreaks that wreak havoc on coral. Both sea-surface temperatures and nutrient plumes have been mapped by satellites for years; however, predicting their future has been a challenge.

Predictions based on decades of data
The researchers analyzed sea temperatures dating back to 1980 and biological data dating back to 1998, including coral cover and chlorophyll a plumes, from 82 survey sites on the main islands of Micronesia to track how they are

influenced by the interaction of these two cycles.

Using those observations, they built models that accurately predicted both sea surface temperatures and nutrients. The models accounted for 77% of the variation in sea temperature and 55% of the variation in chlorophyll a concentrations between 1980 to the present, both of which support strong predictions.

The study shows that including PDO events into forecasts may improve predictions of when and where bleaching and starfish outbreaks will occur. The next step will be to build an online resource to host the predictive model for scientists and resources managers to access and to keep improving the model to the extent possible.

“We provide the first insight into how PDO and El Niño cycles predicted sea-surface temperatures, chlorophyll a concentrations, and changes to coral cover across the tropical north Pacific Ocean,” the authors said. “These results may be transferrable to other oceanic regions to help predict coral reef status at even larger scales.”

Houk’s co-authors include graduate students Christy Starsinic and Andrew McInnis of the Marine Lab, as well as numerous regional researchers including Anthony Yalon of the Yap Community Action Program, Selino Maxin of the Conservation Society of Pohnpei, Marine Gouezo and Yimnang Golbuu of Palau International Coral Reef Center, and Robert van Woesik of the Florida Institute of Technology.

Read the full study at <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-020-64411-8>. **(PR)**



Houk

Vietnam-based Israel out of Hillbroom suit

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona on Tuesday removed Vietnam-based lawyer Barry J. Israel as a defendant in a lawsuit filed by Junior Larry Hillbroom.

Israel’s dismissal is with prejudice, which means Hillbroom could no longer re-file his claims against the lawyer.

Israel, however, remains a party in the case as he has a pending crossclaim against Keith Waibel, who is his co-defendant and the former trustee of Hillbroom’s assets.

The judge issued the order after Hillbroom and Israel filed Friday a stipulation to dismiss

the lawyer from the complaint soon after arriving at a settlement. *Saipan Tribune* is still verifying whether the parties have submitted a copy of their settlement to the court.

Manglona said the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure provides that a court may dismiss an action at the plaintiff’s request.

Rachel A. Dimitruk is counsel for Hillbroom, while Theodore W. Frank is the lawyer for Israel.

Another defendant in the case, Guam lawyer David J. Lujan, and Waibel have also been in talks with Hillbroom about a possible settlement.

Hillbroom is suing Israel, Lujan, and Waibel over alleged mismanagement of ap-

proximately \$90 million that he inherited from his father, Larry Lee Hillblom, a co-founder and former owner of DHL Worldwide Express.

In his lawsuit, Hillbroom alleged Lujan and Israel, together with Waibel, conspired in 2001 to boost their contingency fee when the estate of Hillblom was undergoing probate. Lujan, Israel, and Waibel have denied the allegations. Lujan and Israel have also filed counter-claims against Waibel. Waibel in turn, also filed counterclaims against Lujan and Israel.

Hillbroom, a Palauan, is one of the four DNA-proven children of Hillblom. His name is spelled differently from that of Hillblom.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 20-038

Opening Date: June 24, 2020
Closing Date: Until Filled

SUPERVISOR, WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT OPERATIONS (SAIPAN) (“OS”)

(Re-announcement Ref. #19-029 Rev)

The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (“CUC”) is a government utility providing power, water, and wastewater services in the Northern Mariana Islands (NMI), a U.S. commonwealth in the western Pacific. This position is as required by paragraph 11 of Stipulated Order Number One of the *United States of America vs. the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands*. This position is sometimes referred to with a slightly different word combination, but the key term is “OS” (Operations Supervisor).

DUTIES: The OS will oversee the WWTP operations on all the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota or as applicable. The OS is required to understand, develop and implement a comprehensive sanitary collection system condition and assessment program as required under the Stipulated Order. Knowledge of asset management procedures and application of SCADA protocols are a plus. Understand and use of television and grouting systems for collection system maintenance and FOG (Fats, Oils and Grease) applications are expected. Assist and participate in strategic planning efforts, development of long term planning and visioning pursuits, and grant development applications. Additional duties and responsibilities are as directed and required.

SUBJECT TO PRE-EMPLOYMENT DRUG SCREENING.

The incumbent of this position is under the direct supervision of the Drinking Water and Wastewater Division Manager or “DM” (also known as the Division Manager for Water and Wastewater) who reports directly to the Deputy Executive Director or “DED” (also known as the Deputy Director for Water and Wastewater).

LOCATION: Wastewater Division, SAIPAN, Northern Mariana Islands, USA
SALARY: \$56,439.00 to \$77,479.00 per annum, Exempt (Commensurate with Qualification and Experience)
POSITION: One (1)
CONTRACT: Two (2) years; subject to renewal.

RELOCATION EXPENSES:
If hired from outside the CNMI, relocation expenses are negotiable; but they are not to exceed \$5,000.00 for moving to Saipan and not to exceed \$5,000.00 for moving away from Saipan. Receipts will be required for justification. Other conditions may be applicable.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:
Licensing Requirement: A current Grade III (Level 3) Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator’s Certificate and a Grade III (Level 3) Wastewater Collection Operator’s Certificate from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency or from an authorized alternative (such as from the NMI Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)).
Education: Completion of two (2) years of college, with major courses in sciences, math, or other appropriate fields.
Experience: Three (3) to five (5) years of experience as a supervisor in a wastewater treatment plant utilizing activated sludge secondary treatment processes.
Skills: Demonstrate proven supervisory and communication skills.

Knowledge: Thorough knowledge of the operating principles and maintenance requirements of an activated sludge wastewater treatment plant that operates at a capacity of at least one and a half (1-1/2) mgd, including primary and secondary treatment processes, oxygen production, and sludge digestion and dewatering. Knowledge and pursuit of all regulatory requirements needed to meet treatment level specifications pertaining to island water quality guidelines. Familiarity and knowledge of best practices recommended by the American Water Works Association (AWWA) and Water Environment Federation (WEF) in pursuit of a standard meeting a utility of Future classification.

SUBMISSION PROCESS:
Please submit (1) a cover letter, (2) a resume, (3) a list of references, and (4) a CUC Employment Application by one of the following means:
1. United States Postal Service, First Class Mail or Priority Mail*:
Human Resource Office
Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
P. O. Box 501220
Saipan, MP 96950-1220 USA
*If you choose to submit via USPS, please still also fax “or” email “or” drop off your package.
2. Fax: 670-235-5131
3. Email: employment.applications@cucgov.org
4. Drop Off: Drop off your package at the CUC Human Resource Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan. Otherwise, you may drop it off at the CUC Tinian or Rota Administration Office.

POLICIES: The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation is an equal opportunity provider and employer and will not discriminate or tolerate discrimination against any employee or applicant in any manner prohibited by law. It is also the policy of CUC to achieve a drug-free workplace and persons selected for employment will be required to pass a drug test which screens for illegal drug use prior to final appointment.

Foreign college students taking all-online classes must leave US

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program announced Monday changes to temporary exemptions for nonimmigrant students taking online classes due to the pandemic for the fall 2020 semester.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security plans to publish the procedures and responsibilities in the *Federal Register* as a Temporary Final Rule.

Temporary exemptions for the fall 2020 semester include:

1. Nonimmigrant F-1 and M-1 students attending schools operating entirely online may *not* take a full online course load and remain in the United States. The U.S. Department of State will not issue visas to students enrolled in schools and/or programs that are fully online for the fall semester nor will U.S. Customs and Border Protection permit these students to enter the United States. Active students currently in the United States enrolled in such programs must depart the country or take other measures, such

as transferring to a school with in-person instruction to remain in lawful status. If not, they may face immigration consequences including, but not limited to, the initiation of removal proceedings.

2. Nonimmigrant F-1 students attending schools operating under normal in-person classes are bound by existing federal regulations. Eligible F students may take a maximum of one class or three credit hours online.

3. Nonimmigrant F-1 students attending schools adopting a hybrid model—a mixture of online and in-person classes—will be allowed to take more than one class or three credit hours online. These schools must certify to SEVP, through the Form I-20, “Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status,” certifying that the program is not entirely online, that the student is not taking an entirely online course load this semester, and that the student is taking the minimum number of online classes required to make normal progress in

their degree program. The above exemptions do not apply to F-1 students in English language training programs or M-1 students pursuing vocational degrees, who are not permitted to enroll in any online courses.

Schools should update their information in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System within 10 days of the change if they begin the fall semester with in-person classes but are later required to switch to only online classes, or a nonimmigrant student changes their course selections, and as a result, ends up taking an entirely online course load. Nonimmigrant students within the United States are not permitted to take a full course of study through online classes. If students find themselves in this situation, they must leave the country or take alternative steps to maintain their nonimmigrant status such as a reduced course load or appropriate medical leave.

Due to COVID-19, SEVP instituted a temporary exemp-

tion regarding online courses for the spring and summer semesters. This policy permitted nonimmigrant students to take more online courses than

normally permitted by federal regulation to maintain their nonimmigrant status during the COVID-19 emergency.

F-1 nonimmigrant students

pursue academic coursework and M-1 nonimmigrant students pursue vocational coursework while studying in the United States. **(PR)**

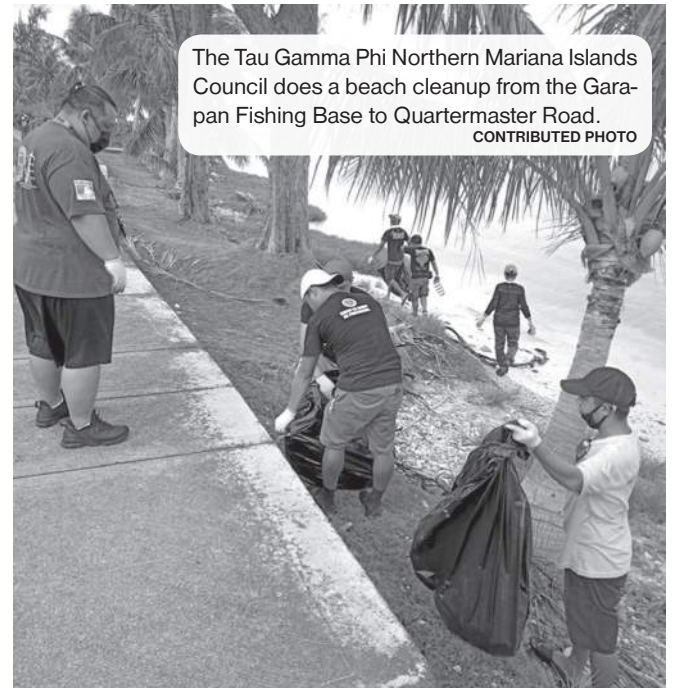
Group holds post-4th of July beach cleanup

The Northern Mariana Islands Council of the Tau Gamma Phi, or the Triskelions Grand Fraternity, held a beach cleanup last Sunday as part of their continued commitment to doing their share to help the community.

Close to 20 members led by NMIC chair Aired Murillo picked up trash from 7am to 10am, cleaning a five-kilometer stretch of the beach side from the Garapan Public Market to Quartermaster. They filled a total of 15 trash bags.

“We planned the beach cleanup and chose the day after the Liberation Day festivities on July 4. [We were] expecting some people might leave their trash behind,” said Murillo. “I salute all the NMIC TGP members that joined us in completing this project. I am very thankful for all the help and constant support that they give to the council.”

United Filipino Organization president Mar Masilungan and some of their members lauded the efforts made by the members of the TGP’s NMI Council.



The Tau Gamma Phi Northern Mariana Islands Council does a beach cleanup from the Garapan Fishing Base to Quartermaster Road. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Masilungan said that Division of Parks and Recreation director Victor Deleon Guerrero Jr. also sends his appreciation to the members of the TGP’s NMI Council.

The beach cleanup was also joined by NMIC TGP officers vice chair Mark Barahan, master keeper of the scroll Adam

Centeno, master keeper of the chest Mike Gil Daynos, and master wielder of the whip Reden Zamora.

Murillo said their next project is to assist TGP brothers and Tau Gamma Sigma, or the Triskelions Grand Sorority, sisters who lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. **(PR)**

No NMC staff furloughed—Eliptico



Northern Marianas College interim president Frankie Eliptico, right, NMC’s interim chief finance officer Shelly Tudela, second from right, and NMC interim dean Patricia Coleman, third from right, speak before the House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee on Capital Hill last July 6.

JUSTINE NAUTA

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic where business and education systems have cut cost or have furloughed almost, if not all, their employees, the Northern Marianas College has so far not furloughed any staff.

This was underscored by NMC interim president Frankie Eliptico during the House Ways and Means Committee budget hearing last July 6, in response to a question raised by Rep. Tina Sablan (Ind-Saipan) whether furloughing any staff would boost the college’s future recruitment or retention costs.

Eliptico said that accreditation rules make it important that NMC doesn’t furlough any employee. “It’s also important for accreditation to demonstrate financial sustainability and to be able to say that we can weather some difficulties in our environment even though this was unprecedented. We wanted to make sure that we were in a strong

financial, academic, and structural place to demonstrate to our creditors that NMC is an institution that is stable and sustainable,” said Eliptico.

Although they did not furlough any staff, NMC did reduce hours for all locally funded employees, Eliptico stated. All locally funded employees are down to 64 hours per pay period.

Eliptico said that, under Public Law 21-08, this fiscal year’s budget law, NMC’s appropriation is set at \$6.07 million. With an adjusted allocation based on a 48% decrease, the amount is now at \$3.1 million, yet NMC has received only \$934,000 so far, which means that they have not received all the appropriate amounts.

“What’s pending on the appropriation side, on Public Law 21-08, is about \$2.2 million,” said Eliptico. Add to that about \$200,000 that the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation has allocated NMC. “So those are pending transfers,” he added.

With the CNMI still reel-

ing from Typhoon Soudelor and Super Typhoon Yutu, the CNMI government austerity, and now the COVID-19 pandemic, NMC has been one of the first to go on austerity. In fact, Eliptico said that the CNMI staff who joined him at the budget hearing are all receiving 20% less than what they would normally receive.

“We will also implement other cost-cutting measures that include leveraging available federal sources, completely restricting any non-federal travels, restricting hiring non-federal positions, [and] we reduce funds that were allocated to all the departments,” said Eliptico. He added that even before the pandemic, NMC was already restricting the hiring of non-federal positions.

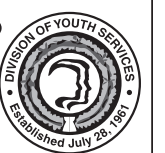
In the budget request he sent the Legislature earlier, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres proposed a budget of just \$2.8 million for NMC, plus a proposed budget of \$51,158 for the board of regents. NMC is asking for a budget of \$10 million for fiscal year 2021.



DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY & CULTURAL AFFAIRS
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

1st Floor Chalan Piao Plaza P.O. Box 501000 C.K. Saipan, MP 96950



PUBLIC HEARING ANNOUNCEMENT

This is to inform the general public that the Division of Youth Services under the auspices of the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs will be conducting Public Hearings on the Consolidated Block Grant under the authority of the Social Services Block Grant – Title XX on the following dates and time:

ISLAND	DATE	TIME	VENUE
Saipan	July 20, 2020	5:30 p.m.	Kagman Community Center
Rota	July 22, 2020	2:30 p.m.	Rota Mayor's Office
Tinian	July 27, 2020	5:00 p.m.	Tinian Elementary School

Electronic copy of the FY2021 Consolidated Block Grant Intended Use Plan may be viewed on the links herein stated:

DYS Website: www.dys.gov.mp
GOVERNOR’S Website: www.gov.mp

For more information, or to retrieve a hard copy, you may contact Vivian T. Sablan, DYS Administrator at 237-1000 or via email: vsablan@dys.gov.mp

/s/ Vivian T. Sablan
DYS Administrator

/s/ Robert H. Hunter
DCCA Secretary

Opinion

Hafa Adair!

Saipan Tribune

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MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

We still don't know enough about what's causing COVID-19 to surge

When demonstrators took to the streets to protest the death of George Floyd under the knee of a Minneapolis police officer, the cause was just but the worry was real: Were the marches going to lead to massive new outbreaks of coronavirus just as most of the nation had flattened the curve?

At the same time, newly reopened bars, restaurants and stores drew customers—sometimes masked, often not—while crowds returned to beaches. Released from sheltering in place, people held gatherings at their homes, trusting that the folks they invited would be careful not to expose everyone around them to danger.

Now, cases are surging in Texas, Florida, Arizona, Nevada, West Virginia, Tennessee and Montana; average case counts hit new highs Sunday in a dozen states, California included. For 27 straight days, the count for the country as a whole has climbed relentlessly higher.

So who's to blame for the frightening increase in infections? Because the new coronavirus is, well, new, there's still a lot we don't know about what makes a situation safe instead of a potential COVID-19 hot spot. But tentative answers are coming in now, sometimes at great human cost.

The protests don't seem to have caused any major health problems, even though the participants often were in close proximity and were frequently yelling, which increases the exhalation of droplets. Demonstrators in Boston were no more likely to test positive afterward than the city's population as a whole. The rates of positive tests were similarly low among demonstrators in Minneapolis and Seattle. A national study by the National Bureau of Economic Research found that overall, coronavirus rates were no higher in counties that were the sites of large protests than those that saw no demonstrations.

These findings are far from definitive, however. In Los Angeles, demonstrators had trouble getting testing appointments, which could mean that some cases are unknown and uncounted; in New York City, city officials instructed contact tracers not to ask people who tested positive whether they had attended protests, as though ignorance was going to make people safer.

Massive gatherings still aren't a good idea—some protesters did in fact become infected—but there's no indication so far that the protests were super-spreader events. Being outdoors almost certainly helped.

Instead, the most common sources of recent COVID-19 surges have been some of the smallest venues, especially bars. People there are socializing indoors, often in close proximity, talking loudly to be heard over the chatter, alco-

See COVID-19 on Next Page



More than policing needs to change

The calls for real transformation of policing are urgent and needed, but not enough. Transformation can start, but not end, there.

The police, after all, are only the front end of the criminal justice system. Prosecutors' offices are next in line; then courts, trial and appellate. Prisons and corrections departments are the back end. Together, these institutions compose a dehumanizing system, one that speaks invariably of "processing" cases.

Racial disparities increase, rather than decrease, at each step. Disproportionately, people of color are stopped, harassed, and arrested by the police; this is especially true for Black people. They and many other people of color also face racial inequities in terms of charging, plea bargaining, and sentencing.

By 2018, Blacks accounted for just 12% of the nation's population but one-third of its prison population. African Americans are incarcerated at five times the rate of whites.

In this form of systemic racism, prosecutors, courts, and corrections departments deserve at least as much attention as police agencies. Recent years have seen the election of so-called "progressive" prosecutors. But only a few, including San Francisco's Chesa Boudin and Philadelphia's Larry Krasner, have attempted real structural changes in the system, beyond sloganeering.

Overall, courts give structure and durability to systemic racism and antipathy toward the impoverished. Courts tolerate two subsystems. Those with money often can achieve relatively good outcomes, while the millions who are poor usually are consigned to overworked, underfunded indigent defenders and often "processed" into bad outcomes.

In courts, an accused's wrongs are "crimes," but the wrongs of police, prosecutors, and judges are "errors" routinely excused as harmless. This leads to impunity and a repetition of wrongs by emboldened government actors, and a corresponding loss of public faith in police, prosecutors, and the courts.

Thanks to the courts, too, police officers who violate the U.S. Constitution in "good faith" usually are immune from liability. No criminal defendant gets a pass for good faith. Further, bad faith or the biases of police officers mostly don't count. Even if the traffic stop was motivated by racism or a desire to snoop, by judicial rule it is fine if the officer claims a minor traffic violation.

At the system's back end, prisons are another obvious target

By DEAN A. STRANG
Tribune News Service

Dean Strang is a criminal defense lawyer, law professor, and author of two books of legal history. He is known for his role in the Netflix series "Making a Murderer." This column was produced for the Progressive Media Project, which is run by The Progressive magazine, and distributed by Tribune News Service.



for transformation. The land of the free and home of the brave, with less than 5% of the world's population, has more than 20% of the world's prisoners. A prison abolition movement, led by people as scattered as Angela Y. Davis in the United States and the sociologist Thomas Mathiesen in Norway, has been around for 50 years or more. It should be heard.

Finally, legislatures are architects of the criminal justice system. They deliberately underfund much of it, especially the defense of the poor. They also have created the redundant layers of police agencies that threaten to smother whole segments of the American populace.

Especially in communities of color, people are over-policed by a stack of police agencies that compete with one another for arrest statistics and prestige. These include a municipal police department, an overlying county sheriff's office, and sometimes a state police force. Many cities now pile on public housing police, public transportation police, port authority and airport police, park police, capitol police, and campus police—most of these with broad policing powers that extend well beyond their core missions.

We also have more than 90 federal law enforcement agencies, again assigned broad powers and overlapping authority. That's right: nearly eight dozen nationwide police agencies created and run by the federal government, which in theory has no general police power at all under our Constitution.

So yes, we should start with transforming the police. But it will be too little if that front end of the system—and thus of structural racism, antipathy to the impoverished, and systemic injustice—is all that we transform.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

A lower COVID-19 death rate is nothing to celebrate

The recent spike in U.S. COVID-19 infections has mercifully been accompanied by a declining death count. There were days in the spring when the country had half the number cases but twice as many deaths. Now, at least, the U.S. is testing more widely.

And even though death is a lagging indicator, and the numbers are likely to catch up to some degree, there is reason to hope that the lag could now be longer and slower than it was in the spring. After all, much has been learned about how to treat COVID-19 patients.

At the same time, however, a lower death count is no justification for states to reopen their economies incautiously or to suggest, as the White House appears to be doing, that Americans should just get used to living with COVID-19.

Fatalities lag behind cases because COVID-19 is a rather slow-going illness. It takes time to develop an infection severe enough to require hospitalization. It can take longer still for an acute infection to result in death. Add in that deaths aren't always reported in a timely manner, and you see why fatalities are slow to rise and fall. Note that at the moment, the U.S. is less than a month into a sustained increase in cases.

Rising death tolls in hot-spot states such as Arizona, Florida and Texas have been balanced so far by declining figures in initially hard-hit states that now have the virus better under control.

California is an unusual case. Its case numbers are rising, yet its

death count is still flat. This may be evidence that fewer of those people most likely to die from COVID-19 are now contracting the virus. This possibility is reinforced by data from several other states showing that COVID cases are skewing younger. Such an age shift means that more people arriving at the hospital have a better chance of surviving.

Once there, patients of all ages are getting better treatment. Remdesivir is helping some, and the steroid dexamethasone is preventing deaths among the severely ill. Having patients lie on their stomachs, a practice known as proning, may also improve outcomes. COVID patients do better in hospitals that are less crowded and overwhelmed, which many have been, until recently.

It must be kept in mind, however, that a lower average death count—say, 500 a day—is still tragic. And if the U.S. continues to add 50,000-plus new cases a day, the number of deaths will rise. Rampant case growth will inevitably breach measures that lead to better outcomes.

If current trends continue, the virus will inevitably spread to more older Americans and other vulnerable people in households with those who get out into the community. Few states provide housing for infected people to wait out the virus.

And as hospitals in some hot spots fill up, the crowding will lead to more deaths—from COVID-19 as well as other illnesses for which people cannot get care.

By **MAX NISEN**

Bloomberg Opinion

Max Nisen is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering biotech, pharma and health care. He previously wrote about management and corporate strategy for Quartz and Business Insider.



Nor is death the only concern raised by rising infection rates. COVID-19 may also cause significant harm to those who survive. Organ damage might be lasting, and extended time in a hospital or on a ventilator can weaken people for months.

The long-term consequences of infection, still poorly understood, are not included in the data that appear on state and national dashboards. But it's obvious that with the numbers the U.S. has seen in the past month—more than a million new infections and more than 30,000 people hospitalized—many more people, and the health system, will feel the effects for years to come.

COVID patients probably have a better chance of survival now than they did in March. They'll almost certainly have even better odds a few months hence. But that's no reason to allow infections to keep soaring.

'Mask exempt' cards? Nice try, but they're not valid

Some people are pathetic.

They'll do anything to avoid wearing a face mask during the coronavirus pandemic—even try to use what at first glance appears to be a government-issued "mask exempt" card.

The cards are circulating on websites and social media. Some are from the Freedom to Breathe Agency. There's no government agency by that name; it's a private group.

People could confuse the group as being part of the government, though, because its cards include the seal of the U.S. Department of Justice. The cards threaten that any business or organization that refuses to allow the card bearer to enter without a mask, and without questions, could be fined.

"I am exempt from any ordinance requiring face mask usage in public," one variation of the card says in bold letters across the top.

"Wearing a face mask poses a mental and/or physical risk to me. Under the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), I am not required to disclose my condition to you," the card says.

Note the misspelling of "poses," and the incorrect citation of the disabilities rights law, which is the Americans with "Disabilities" Act. A government agency would not be so sloppy.

The cards do, though, include the correct phone number to file an ADA complaint with the Justice Department. For its part, the Justice Department says it has nothing to do with the cards despite the use of its logo.

The New York Times reported last week that the Freedom to

Breathe Agency created the cards and is selling them in response to complaints and as "an educational tool" to help people "understand their legal and human rights so they can stand up to the unlawful, unscientific and unconstitutional mandates."

The Department of Justice, Federal Trade Commission and Better Business Bureau have issued warnings about such cards.

"Cards and other documents bearing the Department of Justice seal and claiming that individuals are exempt from face mask requirements are fraudulent," Assistant U.S. Attorney General Eric Dreiband said in a statement last week.

He said the department didn't issue or endorse the cards and the public should not rely on the information contained in flyers and online postings.

"Do not be fooled by the chicanery and misappropriation of the DOJ eagle," Matthew Martin, the U.S. attorney in Greensboro, North Carolina said in a warning June 25. "These cards do not carry the force of law. The 'Freedom to Breathe Agency,' or 'FTBA,' is not a government agency."

Dreiband's statement said, "The ADA does not provide a blanket exemption to people with disabilities from complying with legitimate safety requirements necessary for safe operations."

That's an important distinction.

In Pennsylvania, people with medical conditions are exempt from the state's requirements to wear masks when around others.

They don't have to show a card, or show evidence of their disability. Businesses and organizations must take people for their word.

By **PAUL MUSCHICK**

The Morning Call

Morning Call columnist Paul Muschick can be reached at 610-820-6582 or paul.muschick@mcall.com



The most-recent order issued last week exempts those with ailments including respiratory issues that impede breathing, mental health conditions and disabilities. People also are exempt if they are younger than age 2; can't remove a mask without help; work under conditions that would make wearing a mask unsafe; and need to communicate with someone who is hearing-impaired and needs to lip read.

There are some people who can't wear masks. I feel sorry for them because they may take heat from others who think they're not wearing one because they just don't want to, or to make a political statement.

State officials shouldn't force people to prove their illness or disability. Hopefully, political zealots and other troublemakers won't exploit that loophole. I have my doubts, though, especially with anyone so desperate as to carry a face mask exemption card.

COVID-19

From Page 8

hol loosening their sense of caution, their masks coming off as they drink or not worn at all. A single Michigan bar has set the stage for more than 150 COVID-19 cases so far.

The long-awaited reopening of indoor restaurants also appears to be a contributor. A J.P. Morgan study found that increases in on-site restaurant spending—not takeout—strongly predicted rising COVID-19 rates over the three weeks that followed.

Private get-togethers are repeatedly cited by health officials as problematic. Contact tracing in Sacramento found that the biggest sources of recent spread there were graduation parties, funeral gatherings and the like. Caution falls away when we're with people who are known, loved and trusted.

A 51-year-old Lake Elsinore trucker, Tommy Macias, died June 21 after attending a barbecue where no one wore masks;

he apparently caught it from another attendee who was infected but asymptomatic.

It would be premature to draw too many lessons from the limited data we have at this point. Still, the lectures given by public health officials appear to have been borne out in key ways. Outdoors is clearly less risky than indoors. Social distancing is needed, as are masks, masks, masks. COVID-19 is apolitical and without judgment; it neither rewards protesters nor punishes people who want a drink and some company. It just follows the laws of science.






Those are laws we have to understand much better if reopening—and re-opening—are to work. People need to know which outings and activities minimize risk while providing a semblance of normal life. Most local beaches were closed for the July 4 weekend, but were those beaches, even if crowded, more dangerous than the block parties or backyard barbecues that replaced them? Is a beach significantly more dangerous if it's crowded? And is that more or less risky than a visit to a salon

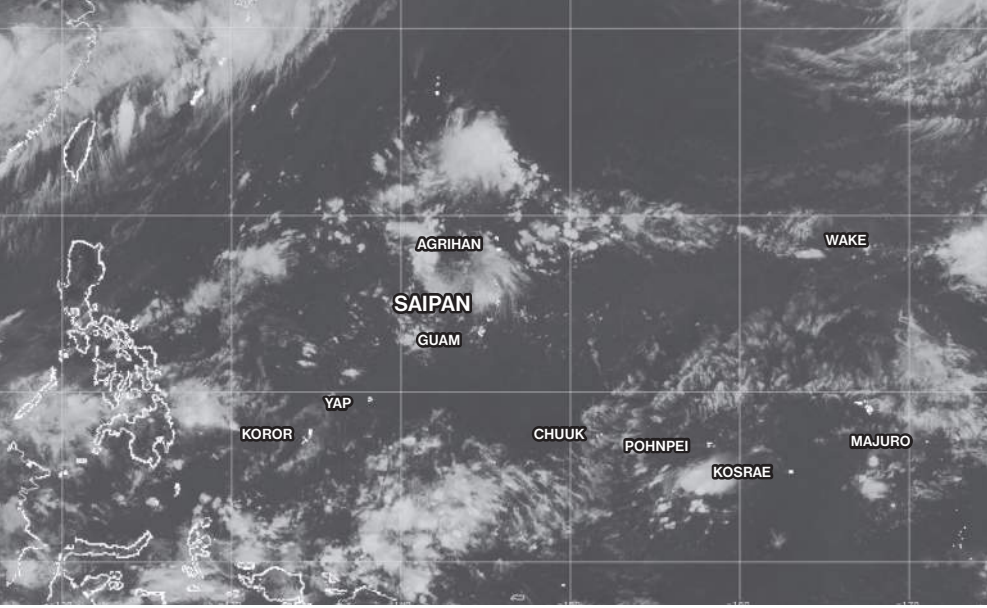
or a workout at the gym? Do trendy, open office spaces need to return to high-walled cubicles? People are guessing, and guesswork doesn't make for good public health policy.

That's where contact tracing comes in. The goal of tracing is to reduce the spread of disease by finding and contacting people who may have been exposed so they can be tested. But it also can provide a mountain of data about the relative safety of different activities and environments, just as it did with the private celebrations in Sacramento. Some tracing exists, but as with many of the nation's efforts, it is not nearly robust enough. That would take concerted support in terms of money and policy at the federal level, which so far has been missing.

The task is monumental and costly. But gaining a better understanding of how the virus is spreading is key to learning how to live with COVID-19 until the disease is tamed.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY	
									
Mostly cloudy. Isolated showers and thunderstorms. East winds around 10 mph		Mostly cloudy. Isolated showers and thunderstorms. East winds around 10 mph		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	
88°	78°	88°	77°	89°	78°	89°	79°	89°	79°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 6:22 AM, WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 2020

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

East trade-winds and a few showers prevail across the Marianas this morning.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/


STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklist-household-ready.html>
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

able, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limiting visitors



CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mp and, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html> and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

- ### Continue good hand hygiene

 - Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
 - Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

- ### Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

 - Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
 - Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
 - Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not avail-

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

MICRONESIA			▲▼°F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorm	87° / 79°	
Palau	Thunderstorm	84° / 76°	
Yap	Thunderstorm	86° / 79°	
Chuuk	Thunderstorm	85° / 79°	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorm	87° / 76°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorm	87° / 76°	
Majuro	Thunderstorm	85° / 81°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	5:52 AM	6:51 PM
Friday	5:53 AM	6:51 PM
Saturday	5:53 AM	6:51 PM
Sunday	5:53 AM	6:51 PM
Monday	5:54 AM	6:51 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	9:15 AM	10:10 PM
Friday	-	10:05 AM	10:48 PM
Saturday	-	10:53 AM	11:24 PM
Sunday	-	11:39 AM	11:59 PM
Monday	-	12:25 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲▼°F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	57° / 52°	
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	84° / 70°	
Hong Kong	Thunderstorm	88° / 81°	
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	86° / 75°	
London	Mostly Sunny	84° / 59°	
Los Angeles	Sunny	89° / 71°	
Manila	Thunderstorm	86° / 77°	
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	57° / 45°	
Miami	Thunderstorm	88° / 81°	
New York	Mostly Sunny	87° / 71°	
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	90° / 77°	
Paris	Sunny	84° / 61°	
Busan	Partly Cloudy	82° / 73°	
Rome	Sunny	91° / 70°	
Salem	Thunderstorm	85° / 70°	
San Francisco	Sunny	70° / 56°	
Seoul	Cloudy	84° / 72°	
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	90° / 75°	
Washington, DC	Sunny	88° / 70°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
5:01 AM	LOW TIDE	1.34	
9:26 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.85	
4:48 PM	LOW TIDE	0.11	
11:57 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.97	

FLIGHT SCHEDULE

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	9:15am	9:55am	1, 4, 6	UA174	7:30am	8:11am	1, 4, 6

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

SAIPAN TO ROTA				1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1208	14:00	14:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1301.2	8:30AM	9:00AM	Tues/Fri	1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Tues/Fri	1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN				1211	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1212	18:00	18:15	Temporarily Unavailable
3101.2	9:30AM	10:00AM	Tues/Fri				
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Tues/Fri				
ROTA TO GUAM							
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY				
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable				
GUAM TO ROTA							
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY				
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable				
SAIPAN TO TINIAN							
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY				
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable				
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily				
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily				
1204	10:00	10:15	Temporarily Unavailable				
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable				
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable				

TINIAN TO SAIPAN							
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily	2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily	2104	10:30	10:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2104	10:30	10:45	Temporarily Unavailable	2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable	2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable	2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable	2108	14:30	14:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Temporarily Unavailable	2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily	2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily	2111	17:30	17:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2111	17:30	17:45	Temporarily Unavailable	2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable				



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PAPA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

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Business

AQUA CONNECTIONS INC.

Largest diving shop on Saipan

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

For over two decades now, locally owned Aqua Connections Inc. has been everyone's go-to-place on Saipan for aquatic services such as scuba, free diving, snorkeling, specialty courses for deep dives, and boat charters. They are also complete with equipment and gear from head to toe, so you will be able to do any of the aquatic activities you choose safely and get maximum experience.

"Aqua Connections Inc. is the largest diving shop on Saipan. Aside from being in business for many years, we have three dive shops located in Garapan, Beach Road, and Managaha to cater to the needs of our customers...As far as the market goes, we don't discriminate against anybody," PADI open water

diving instructor Robbie G. Wyckoff said.

"There are Chinese, Korean, and Japanese dive shops on island that cater to limited [clientele] as Chinese dive shops only have customers from China and the same with Korean and Japanese customers...Aqua Connections, Inc. caters to anybody...The main office in Garapan is primarily for residents and the need that they might have," Wyckoff added.

Aqua Connections has intact health and safety protocols in all of their shops where masks are required upon entry, use of sanitizer as you pass the door, and bright tape markers are on the floor to ensure social distancing. Since scuba diving and other water activities have been given a go-signal by the COVID-19 Task Force last June 28, Aqua Connections did not dilly-dally in making their services acces-



PHOTOS BY BEA CABRERA

Aqua Connections, Inc dive instructors and staff. From left, corporate assistant secretary Naomi Samura, scuba instructor and supervisor Hasao Hoshino, sales associate Breana Chargualaf, and PADI instructor Robbie G. Wyckoff.

sible and ready.

"We currently slashed our prices in half... for people who want to be a certified open water scuba diver, we usually charge \$350 to \$400 but now we offer \$200. For 'Discovery Scuba dives non-certified' we now offer \$25 per person as it was \$50 per person before," Wyckoff said.

"For children ages 10 to 14, we offer Junior Open Water and Junior Advance open water... a family of four can take dive lessons altogether... Youngest for open water diving is for 15 year old and there is no age limit when it comes to learning scuba but we do require medical certification stating that the person is physically fit to go diving," Wyckoff added.

For those who are not in the

know, scuba diving is a great alternative to get your cardio workout in. "On average per dive, you can burn 200-300 calories as you need to remember your body is constantly surrounded by water pressure and so every little

movement you make, that's resistance and an instant work-

out. For people who are looking for a new form of exercise, we encourage them to go scuba diving because it is an excellent way to lose weight," Wyckoff said.

"Diving on Saipan is different every time and never gets old. The marine life in our waters is abundant. Recently, some divers spotted pygmy seahorses at Wing Beach which are rare... people get their expensive cameras underwater to take photos of cor-

als and turtles... whales were spotted in Managaha recently and on the strait between Saipan and Tinian...scuba diving is a sport that everyone should try," he added.

Aqua Connections has certified and experienced dive instructors and boat captains so clients can be assured of quality lessons in any aquatic sport

they offer. Aqua Connections' main shop is located along Beach Road in Garapan and is open from Monday to Sunday from 11am to 5pm.

For more information, call (670) 233-3304, (670) 483-5902 or visit their Facebook page: Aqua Connections and website: <http://www.saipan-aquaconnections.com>.



Aqua Connections, Inc. carries gear and equipment from well-known brands that ensures quality and durability.



Established over two decades ago and located along Beach Road in Garapan, Aqua Connections, Inc. is back performing normal operations.

Data: Congress created virus aid, then reaped the benefits

WASHINGTON (AP)—At least a dozen lawmakers have ties to organizations that received federal coronavirus aid, according to newly released government data, highlighting how Washington insiders were both author and beneficiary of one of the biggest government programs in U.S. history.

Under pressure from Congress and outside groups, the Trump administration this week disclosed the names of some loan recipients in the

\$659 billion Paycheck Protection Program, launched in April to help smaller businesses keep Americans employed during the pandemic. Connections to lawmakers, and the organizations that work to influence them, were quickly apparent.

Among businesses that received money was a California hotel partially owned by the husband of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, as well as a shipping business started

by Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao's family. Chao is married to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

Car dealerships owned by at least three Republican House members—Reps. Roger Williams of Texas, Vern Buchanan of Florida and Mike Kelly of Pennsylvania—received money. So, too, did fast-food franchises owned by Rep. Kevin Hern, R-Okla., a law firm owned by the husband of Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H.,

and the former law firm of Rep. Matt Cartwright, D-Pa., which employs his wife.

Money also flowed to a farming and equipment business owned by the family of Rep. Vicky Hartzler, R-Mo., and a regional casino company led by the husband of Rep. Susie Lee, D-Nev.

Members of Congress and their families are not barred from receiving loans under the PPP, and there is no evidence they received special treat-

ment. Loans were granted to Democrats and Republicans alike, something President Donald Trump's campaign was quick to highlight when records showed donors to his campaign coffers were among the earliest beneficiaries.

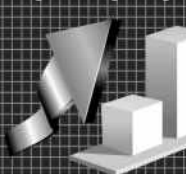
Hundreds of millions of dollars also flowed to political consultants, opposition research shops, law firms, advocacy organizations and trade associations whose work is based around influencing government and politics.

While voting, lobbying and ultimately benefiting from

legislation aren't illegal, advocates say the blurred lines risk eroding public trust in the federal pandemic response as Congress begins debating yet another round of coronavirus relief.

"It certainly looks bad and smells bad," said Aaron Scherb, a spokesperson for Common Cause, a watchdog group whose education arm was also approved for a loan through the program. Members of Congress should not be allowed to vote on bills in which they can personally benefit, he said.

STOCK PORTFOLIO



LEADING INDICATORS

S&P

3,145.00
+8.50
+0.27%

DOW

25,835.00
+65.00
+0.25%

NASDAQ

10,564.50
+32.25
+0.31%

In U.S. dollar terms

EXCHANGE RATES

		Hong Kong Dollar	7.75	Russian Ruble	70.31
Australian Dollar	1.44	Indian Rupee	74.43	Singapore Dollar	1.40
British Pound	0.80	Japanese Yen	107.49	South Korean Won	1,169.64
Canadian Dollar	1.36	Malaysian Ringgit	4.23	Swiss Franc	0.94
Chinese Yuan	6.91	New Zealand Dollar	1.53	Taiwan Dollar	28.92
Euro	0.89	Philippine Peso	48.54	Thailand Baht	31.25

Nation

Trump pushes state, local leaders to reopen schools in fall

President Donald Trump on Tuesday launched an all-out effort pressing state and local officials to reopen schools this fall, arguing that some are keeping schools closed not because of the risks from the coronavirus pandemic but for political reasons.

"They think it's going to be good for them politically, so they keep the schools closed," Trump said at a White House discussion on school plans for the fall. "No way. We're very much going to put pressure on governors and everybody else to open the schools."

The White House's roundtable gathered health and education leaders from across the nation who said schools and colleges are ready to open this fall and can do so safely. They argued that the risks of keeping students at home outweigh any risks tied to the coronavirus, saying students need access to meal programs and mental and behavioral health services.

"We want to reopen the schools," Trump said. "Everybody wants it. The moms want it, the dads want it, the kids want it. It's time to do it."

But that bright outlook was met with skepticism by some beyond the White House. The president of the nation's largest education union said Trump is more interested in scoring points for the November election than in keeping students safe.

"Trump has proven to be incapable of grasping that



President Donald Trump listens during a "National Dialogue on Safely Reopening America's Schools," event in the East Room of the White House, Tuesday, July 7, 2020, in Washington.

people are dying—that more than 130,000 Americans have already died," said Lily Eskelsen García, president of the National Education Association. "Educators want nothing more than to be back in classrooms and on college campuses with our students, but we must do it in a way that keeps students, educators and communities safe."

At the White House event,

Trump repeated his claim that Democrats want to keep schools closed for political reasons and not health reasons. He made the same claim on Twitter a day before, saying: "They think it will help them in November. Wrong, the people get it!"

Trump offered no evidence for the allegation, which has been criticized by health experts who say politicizing

the issue will make it harder to work toward reopening schools. Jennifer Nuzzo, of Johns Hopkins University's COVID-19 Testing Insights Initiative, said she was "deeply troubled" by the claim.

"When you make it about politics and just people trying to score points and get elected, I mean, I really think it's a disservice to how incredibly important this issue is," Nuzzo

said in an interview. "And it really distracts from what I think we need, which is real solutions and a plan in order to make this happen."

Whether schools and colleges should open this fall and how has been a topic of growing debate as the coronavirus continues to surge in parts of the United States. Trump applauded Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis for his state's recent order to open public schools this fall. And Trump attacked Harvard University for its de-

cision to hold instruction online for the fall term.

"I think it's ridiculous, I think it's an easy way out and I think they ought to be ashamed of themselves, if you want to know the truth," Trump said Tuesday.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has sent mixed signals on the issue, saying students should return to the classroom but also noting that virtual classes present the lowest risk of COVID-19 spread. Speaking at Trump's event Tuesday, however, the agency's director said unequivocally that it's better for students to be in school than at home.

Dr. Robert Redfield noted that COVID-19 cases tend to be mild in young people, adding that the greatest risk is transmission from children to more vulnerable populations. He said the CDC encourages all schools to reopen with customized plans to minimize the spread of the coronavirus while giving students access to school services.

"It's clear that the greater risk to our society is to have these schools close," Redfield said. "Nothing would cause me greater sadness than to see any school district or school use our guidance as a reason not to reopen."

The CDC's guidance for schools recommends that students and teachers wear masks "as feasible," spread out desks, stagger schedules, eat meals in classrooms instead of the cafeteria, and add physical barriers between bathroom sinks. (AP)

Video shows facility staff restraining Black teen who died

At least seven men forcibly restrained a teenager who had a heart attack and died two days later. The staffers at a youth facility in Michigan held down the boy's arms and legs and sat on him as he screamed that he couldn't breathe, an attorney representing the boy's estate said Tuesday.

Surveillance video footage from the Lakeside Academy in Kalamazoo shows 16-year-old Cornelius Fredericks being pushed to the floor and held down by staff members because he threw a sandwich in the cafeteria. About a dozen teenagers can be seen sitting in the cafeteria at the time.

The video was released Tuesday by Detroit-area attorney Geoffrey Fieger, who represents Fredericks' estate. A civil lawsuit filed by the estate in June says the boy screamed "I can't breathe" on April 29 as he was restrained for what appeared to be about 12 minutes on video released by the state late Tuesday.

On the video, several of the men appear to pull on and hold down Fredericks' arms and legs while others sit or lay atop his chest and abdomen. Toward the end of the video, the teen appears limp and falls back to the floor when staffers try to sit him up. Others then move in and start CPR.

"He's not fighting at all ... his shoes and his feet are just lying there," Fieger said, referring to the videotape.

The teenager went into cardiac arrest, was hospitalized and died two days later, authorities said. The death was ruled a homicide and the doctor who performed the autopsy said Fredericks died of asphyxia.

Two male staffers and a female nurse—Michael Mosley of Battle Creek, Zachary Solis of Lansing and Heather McLogan of Kalamazoo—were fired and have been charged with involuntary manslaughter and second-degree child abuse in Fredericks' death.

Fieger said he is urging authorities to recommend charging others.

"As you can see in the video, far more than two people are involved in suffocating him," Fieger said. "I would urge them to reconsider the other people ... who are clearly involved in the killing of Cornelius."

Fredericks had been a ward of the state for several years, following his mother's death when his father was incarcerated.

Fieger said his office had a forensic examiner review the footage and that portions of the videotape are missing. He didn't specifically say that he believed the video had been edited or explain what had happened, or why.

"It jumps and there suddenly people are no longer in the scene that were there one second before," he said.

In its investigation, the state of Michigan disclosed that staff members at Lakeside had

also suffocated Fredericks as a form of discipline, according to Fieger.

"It is a horrific videotape and it demonstrates what other employees have told us is a culture of fear and abuse at the Lakeside facility," Fieger said. "One employee told us that in order to work there all you needed was to be breathing and accept \$13 per hour."

"The mechanism for dealing with children in this facility was abuse and fear," he added. "In fact, suffocation was regularly practiced upon children. They called it 'fearing.'"

Lakeside Academy and its operator, Sequel Youth and Family Services, are named in the civil lawsuit.

The staff members' actions shown in the video don't "adhere to the Sequel and Lakeside Academy policies and procedures related to the use of emergency safety interventions," Sequel Youth and Family Services said in a statement Tuesday. (AP)

Andrew Jackson statue loses status in city named for him

JACKSON, Miss. (AP)—A Mississippi city named after former U.S. President Andrew Jackson will remove a downtown statue of him and put it in a less prominent spot.

The City Council in Jackson, Mississippi, voted 5-1 Tuesday to relocate the bronze figure that has stood outside City Hall for decades.

It's the latest of many changes in the United States as people reconsider monuments to historical figures with connections to slavery and racism.

No immediate plans were made for a time or place to move the Andrew Jackson statue, which is a bit larger than life and shows him standing in a military uniform. The statue was made in 1968 and dedicated in 1972. City Councilwoman Virgi Lindsay said it could go to a museum.

Councilman Kenneth Stokes proposed removing the statue, saying the city is showing leadership by making the change. The only dissenting vote came from the council's lone Republican, Ashby Foote.

Jackson is Mississippi's capital city, with a population of about 160,600. About 82% of its residents are African American.

Andrew Jackson was the seventh president, serving from 1829 to 1837. In addition to owning enslaved people, he also oversaw the forced migration of Native Americans in which many died. His face is on the \$20 bill.

Four people have been charged with trying to pull down a large statue of Jackson near the White House during protests June 22 in Washington.

Asia

Indian, Chinese soldiers move away from site of deadly clash

SRINAGAR, India (AP)—Indian and Chinese soldiers have backed away from the site of a deadly clash last month in the Galwan Valley along the undemarcated border, Indian security officials said, a sign of the countries' progress in disengaging from a months-long standoff.

The two sides also appeared to have dismantled recent construction along the river valley high in the Karakoram mountains, satellite images showed.

Three Indian security officials familiar with the developments said soldiers on both sides have moved back about a kilometer (0.6 mile) from the site of their clash on June 15, when military personnel fought with rocks, clubs and their fists in hand-to-hand combat that left 20 Indian soldiers dead.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter and in keeping with government regulations.

The two sides have also moved apart at two locations in the Hot Spring area, out of at least five places where Indian officials said the Chinese had crossed the Line of Actual Control, the area of the border that remains disputed following a 1962 war that ended in an uneasy truce.

They said soldiers continued to stand at close range at two other sites along the 3,380-kilometer (2,100-mile) line of control, at Dapsang and Pangong Lake. At the picturesque lake, the Chinese were 8 kilometers (5 miles) within

the disputed border area, the officials said.

Satellite images from June 28 appeared to show that the Indians had built a wall on their side of the Galwan Valley and the Chinese had expanded a camp at the end of a long road connected to Chinese military bases farther from the poorly defined border, according to experts.

But images released on Monday by Maxar, a Colorado-based satellite imagery company, showed those recent additions now gone.

"There are no structures or vehicles visible within 1.3 kilometers (0.8 mile) of the LAC in the valley," said Nathan Ruser, an imagery analyst at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute.

However, Ruser said satellite images showed a "large tent structure" of about 900 square meters (9,687 square feet) appeared just under a mile (1.6 kilometers) from the Line of Actual Control. The tent did not appear in June 28 images of the same area.

The purpose of the tent and its possible contents, if any, were unclear.

The countries' special representatives on the border issue, Indian national security adviser Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, agreed in a phone call Sunday that "maintenance of peace and tranquility in the India-China border areas was essential for the further development of our bilateral relations," and to "complete the ongoing disengagement process along the LAC expeditiously," India's

foreign ministry said in a statement Monday.

The phone call came after Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi made an unannounced visit to a military base in the Indian territory of Ladakh, visiting injured soldiers and praising their bravery.

The face-off began in early May, first at three places including Pangong Lake, and then escalated to two other places in Dapsang and Galwan in June.

India and China have blamed each other for provoking the June 15 brawl in the Galwan Valley, the Asian giants' most violent encounter in 45 years, and have staked fresh claims to the area where it occurred.

China's ambassador to India, Sun Weidong, told the Press Trust of India news agency that there were "casualties between the two sides," but Chinese officials have not detailed any deaths or injuries on their side.

The countries went to war in 1962 over their competing claims to the arid border region, with the conflict spilling over into Ladakh.

Lt. Gen. D.S. Hooda, a former head of the Indian military's Northern Command which controls Ladakh, said the beginning of disengagement was a "good, positive step."

"Good that some stalemate is broken but it's going to be a long and protracted negotiation for a substantial disengagement at military level. The full de-escalation will be hard bargaining at diplomatic level," he said.

central Japan, flooding was still affecting the southern region. And search and rescue operations continued in Kumamoto, where 14 people are still missing.

Tens of thousands of army troops, police and other rescue workers mobilized from around the country to assist, and the rescue operations have been hampered by the rains, flooding, mudslides and disrupted communications.

Japan is at high risk of heavy rain in early summer when wet and warm air from the East China Sea flows into a seasonal rain front above the country. In July 2018, more than 200 people, about half of them in Hiroshima, died from heavy rain and flooding in southwestern Japan.

World

Brazil's President Bolsonaro tests positive for coronavirus

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP)—Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro said Tuesday he has tested positive for the new coronavirus after months of downplaying its severity while deaths mounted rapidly inside the country.

The 65-year-old right-wing populist who has been known to mingle in crowds without covering his face confirmed the results while wearing a mask and speaking to reporters huddled close in front of him in the capital, Brasilia.

He said he is taking hydroxychloroquine, the anti-malaria drug that he, like President Donald Trump, has been promoting even though it has not been proven effective against COVID-19.

"I'm, well, normal. I even want to take a walk around here, but I can't due to medical recommendations," Bolsonaro said. "I thought I had it before, given my very dynamic activity. I'm president and on the combat lines. I like to be in the middle of the people."

Brazil, the world's sixth-biggest nation, with more than 210 million people, is one of the outbreak's most lethal hot spots. More than 65,000 Brazilians have died from COVID-19, and over 1.5 million have been infected.



In this May 25, 2020, file photo, Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro, wearing a face mask amid the coronavirus pandemic, stands among supporters as he leaves his official residence of Alvorada palace in Brasilia, Brazil.

Both numbers are the world's second-highest totals, behind those of the U.S., though the true figures are believed to be higher because of a lack of widespread testing. On Tuesday alone, 1,254 deaths were confirmed.

Other world leaders who have had bouts with COVID-19 include British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Britain's Prince Charles, Prince Albert II of Monaco and Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández.

Bolsonaro is "the democratic leader who has most denied the seriousness of this pandemic," said Mauricio Santoro, a political science professor at the State University of Rio de Janeiro. "Him getting infected is

a blow to his credibility. It will be seen as another example of the failure of his coronavirus response."

Bolsonaro has often appeared in public to shake hands with supporters and mingle with crowds, at times without a mask. He has said that his history as an athlete would protect him from the virus and that it would be nothing more than a "little flu" if he were to contract it.

He has also repeatedly said that there is no way to prevent 70% of the population falling ill with COVID-19 and that local authorities' efforts to shut down economic activity would ultimately cause more hardship than allowing the virus to run its course.

Russia and China veto cross-border aid to Syria's northwest

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—Russia and China vetoed a U.N. resolution Tuesday that would maintain two border crossing points from Turkey to deliver humanitarian aid to Syria's mainly rebel-held northwest for a year, which the United Nations says is crucial to save millions of lives.

Russia, Syria's close ally, immediately circulated a draft Security Council resolution that would authorize the delivery of aid through a single crossing point from Turkey for six months.

Germany's U.N. Ambassador Christoph Heusgen, the current council president, announced the 13-2 result of the vote at a virtual meeting which saw the United States attack Russia and China over their vetoes.

"We're ashamed by what this council has to do right now because of the cyni-

cal attempts of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China to put politics above the lives of the Syrian people," U.S. Minister-Counselor Rodney Hunter said.

China's U.N. Ambassador Zhang Jun blamed unilateral sanctions against Syria, which have been imposed by the U.S. and the European Union, for exacerbating the country's humanitarian situation and urged that they be lifted. He also rejected the U.S. heaping "blame" on China, saying "it's once again demonstrating the hypocritical approach adopted by this country while they are imposing unilateral sanctions."

Hunter retorted that U.S. sanctions have humanitarian exemptions "and they in no way harm the people of Syria."

"The only thing that's

harming the people of Syria and preventing them from getting the assistance that they need is the Assad regime being helped out by the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation," he said.

The defeated resolution, drafted by Germany and Belgium, had dropped a call for the re-opening of an Iraqi crossing to the northeast to deliver medical supplies for the COVID-19 pandemic. In May, Russia's U.N. Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia said: "Do not waste your time on efforts to reopen the closed cross-border points."

Russia has argued that aid should be delivered from within Syria across conflict-lines. But U.N. humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock has insisted that the two crossings from Turkey to the northwest remain "a lifeline for millions of civilians whom the U.N. cannot reach by other means."

Japan battered by more heavy rain, floods, nearly 60 dead

TOKYO (AP)—Pounding rain that already caused deadly floods in southern Japan was moving northeast Wednesday, battering large areas of Japan's main island, swelling more rivers, triggering mudslides and destroying houses and roads. At least 58 people have died in several days of flooding.

By Wednesday morning, parts of Nagano and Gifu in central Japan were flooded by massive downpours.

Footage on NHK television showed swollen water in the Hida River gouging into the embankment, destroying a national highway along the river. In another central Japanese city of Gero, river water rose to just below the bridge above it.

In a mountainous town of

Takayama, several houses were hit by a mudslide, with uprooted trees and other debris scattered around. It was not immediately known what happened to their residents.

Across the country, about 3.6 million people were advised to evacuate, although evacuation is not mandatory and the number of people who actually took shelter was not provided.

As of Wednesday morning, the death toll from the heavy rains starting over the weekend had risen to 58, most of them from the hardest-hit Kumamoto prefecture. Four others were found in Fukuoka, another prefecture on Kyushu, Japan's third-largest island.

Though the rains were causing fresh flooding threats in

Environment

By ALEX BROWN
STATELINE.ORG

If a hurricane bears down on Florida this summer, residents likely won't be told to evacuate to the safety of a high school gymnasium or large civic building. Instead, they may be asked to download an app that assigns them to an open hotel room—a shelter from both the storm and the threat of a COVID-19 outbreak.

State officials have mapped out all of Florida's 5,000 hotels, along with the wind rating of each facility and whether it has a generator on hand. So far, they've persuaded 200 hotels to sign up to serve as shelters; they're aiming to reach 1,000.

Meanwhile, the state plans to work with local restaurants and commercial kitchens to help supply packaged meals for evacuees, a shift from the buffet-style feeding operations typical of a disaster response.

Across the country, as summer brings extreme weather to much of the United States, emergency planners are preparing for hurricanes, wildfires and other disasters amid the ongoing pandemic. The novel coronavirus has upended nearly every plan in the disaster response playbook.

"Everything, everything, everything is complicated by COVID-19," said Jared Moskowitz, director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management.

Moskowitz's agency has stockpiled 10 million masks, 1 million face shields and 5 million gloves. Those supplies will be held in reserve, to limit the exposure of first responders and evacuees in a disaster scenario. Displaced residents who arrive at a shelter may immediately be given a kit with personal protective equipment. Evacuations will look different as well.

"If people need to evacuate, the state will provide resources to folks who cannot afford to do so," Moskowitz said. "In the past it was buses, now it might be Uber or fuel cards."

"This year will be, no question, one of the most challenging that we've faced," said Mark Ghilarducci, director of the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services. "This is about as complex a series of challenges as you could face, and all have cascading impacts."

In recent years, California has been besieged by record-setting wildfires, a severe drought—and the ever-present threat of earthquakes. State officials try to be prepared for two major disasters and one moderate disaster at any given time, Ghilarducci said. As



(PHOTO BY GREGORY SHAMUS/GETTY IMAGES/TNS)

A aerial view of floodwaters flowing from the Tittabawassee River into the lower part of downtown Midland on May 20, 2020 in Midland, Michigan.

This disaster season, 'everything is complicated by COVID-19'

wildfire season approaches, they're already dealing with a public health crisis—and unlike other disasters, its impact is being felt statewide.

Disaster planners say they're most concerned about their ability to provide mass care. Evacuating scores of residents on crowded buses will no longer be feasible. Cramming families into a stadium or civic center for shelter conflicts with public health guidelines. As does feeding them in a communal operation.

And those who volunteer to carry out the response efforts are disproportionately older people. Officials won't be counting on them to help while the virus remains a threat.

Instead of carrying out large-scale relief operations, states may find themselves coordinating an ad hoc, patchwork system of existing local resources. Hotels—which are now largely empty of tourists—are anticipated to be one part of the solution. College dormitories may be used as well. Local restaurants may be pressed into service.

Craig Fugate, who led the Federal Emergency Management Agency under President Barack Obama, said that approach has the added benefit of putting money into the hands of hotels and restaurants that have been empty since the pandemic started.

"We ought to be putting them back to work," Fugate said. "In a disaster, any opportunity we have to engage the local workforce helps them to survive the disaster."

Multiple state officials in-

terviewed by Stateline said they expect hotels that shelter evacuees and restaurants that provide meals would be reimbursed with state and federal relief dollars.

During the pandemic, California has secured 16,000 hotel rooms to shelter its homeless population, frontline workers, released prisoners and residents under quarantine.

About 8,000 of the rooms are occupied now, and the remainder could house evacuees in the wake of a wildfire or earthquake. However, that would require displaced residents to disperse far across the state to reach the available rooms.

Meanwhile, the state is working to distribute 1.5 million meals a week to Californians who are struggling financially because of the pandemic—a program that Ghilarducci said can be extended and broadened to help in a disaster.

In Hawaii, emergency planners typically design shelter capacity to provide each occupant about 10 square feet of space. To maintain social distancing, officials now believe they'll have to increase that to 100 square feet.

"The shelters are a huge challenge, and we don't have a definitive answer on that," said Hiro Toiya, director of the Honolulu Department of Emergency Management.

Toiya's agency plans to

combat overcrowding of local transportation options.

Because much of the state is prone to flooding, it's unclear which hotels in which locations would be able to offer help. But multistory hotels in New Orleans may be able to at least provide shelter in their upper floors. Louisiana has a stockpile of meals ready-to-eat—MREs—available to distribute, but it would be a challenge to get them to residents dispersed among hundreds or thousands of hotel rooms.

State officials across the country also acknowledged that the neighboring states they often rely on for aid may not be able to supply as much help as they continue to deal with the virus. But planners universally praised the Federal Emergency Management Agency, saying they anticipate plenty of help from the agency, even as President Donald Trump has feuded with some governors and threatened funding for their states.

Amid all the preparation, officials fear that residents may not heed evacuation warnings if they fear the pandemic more.

"You can have the best plans in the world, but if the public isn't listening to information from local officials, your plans won't work," said Mike Steele, communications director for the Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness. "We're trying to figure out the best way to message to the public that just because you have COVID-19 concerns doesn't mean that

storm surge won't be just as dangerous this year."

Responders faced an early test in Michigan in May, when flooding and dam failures displaced 10,000 residents in Midland. At shelter facilities, masks were given to all arrivals, and beds were 6 feet apart and frequently sanitized. Alternate arrangements were made for evacuees with COVID-19 symptoms.

"Our message with normal COVID response is to discourage public gatherings and whatnot," Midland County Public Health Director Fred Yanoski told the Detroit Free Press. "And in this particular situation, it is unavoidable as we've had to move several thousand people into a handful of sheltering facilities."

Evacuees aren't the only concern. In states prone to wildfires, officials are rethinking the way firefighters assemble to battle blazes. This summer, they won't be gathering in large camps and eating communal meals. They'll divide into smaller units, some briefings will be held online, and some firefighters may sleep in nearby hotels. Transportation to and from fire lines is another concern.

"How do you deal with COVID-19 and a major fire season simultaneously? That's what got us sweating," said Robert Ezelle, director of the Washington Military Department's Emergency Management Division. "If the disease continues its current course, we're probably OK for the majority of fire season. If there's a second wave at the same time we're fighting a major fire season, that's where things are going to get very challenging."

States also are concerned about the ability of overtaxed health care systems to perform in a disaster. Medical professionals have been dealing not only with the pandemic, but with furloughs and cutbacks in many hospital systems. The California Health Corps has recruited 70,000 volunteers to help battle COVID-19, and even then resources are limited.

"This year we're not going to be able to get as many assets out the door in the long term because of their efforts working back home due to COVID," Ghilarducci said. "An earthquake right now—it could be a big challenge for everybody."

Life & Style

Mary Trump's book offers scathing portrayal of president

NEW YORK (AP)—President Donald Trump's niece offers a scathing portrayal of her uncle in a new book, blaming a toxic family for raising a narcissistic, damaged man who poses an immediate danger to the public, according to a copy obtained Tuesday by The Associated Press.

Mary L. Trump, a psychologist, writes that Trump's reelection would be catastrophic and that "lying, playing to the lowest common denominator, cheating, and sowing division are all he knows."

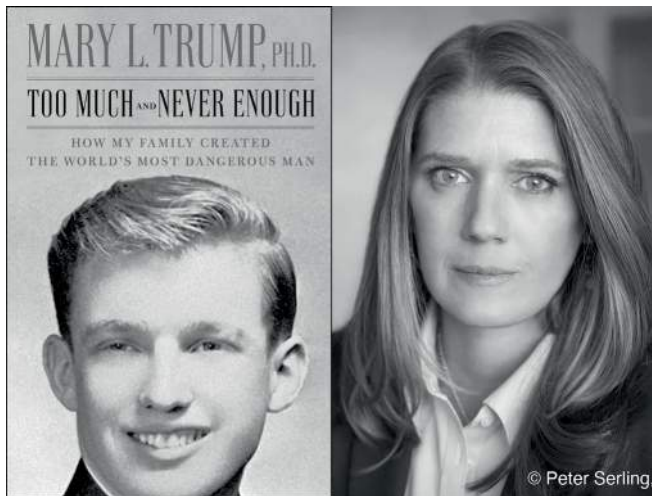
"By the time this book is published, hundreds of thousands of American lives will have been sacrificed on the altar of Donald's hubris and willful ignorance. If he is afforded a second term, it would be the end of American Democracy," she writes in "Too Much and Never Enough, How My Family Created The World's Most Dangerous Man."

Mary Trump is the daughter of Trump's elder brother, Fred Jr., who died after a struggle with alcoholism in 1981 at 42. The book is the second insider account in two months to paint

a deeply unflattering portrait of the president, following the release of former national security adviser John Bolton's bestseller.

In her book, Mary Trump, who is estranged from her uncle, makes several revelations, including alleging that the president paid a friend to take the SATs—a standardized test widely used for college admissions—in his place. She writes that his sister Maryanne Trump did his homework for him but couldn't take his tests and he worried his grade point average, which put him far from the top of the class, would "scuttle his efforts to get accepted" into the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, where he transferred after two years at Fordham University in the Bronx.

"To hedge his bets he enlisted Joe Shapiro, a smart kid with a reputation for being a good test taker, to take his SATs for him," she writes, adding, "Donald, who never lacked for funds, paid his buddy well."



AP
This combination photo shows the cover art for "Too Much and Never Enough: How My Family Created the World's Most Dangerous Man", left, and a portrait of author Mary L. Trump, Ph.D.

White House spokesperson Sarah Matthews called the allegation "completely false."

Mary Trump also writes, in awe, of Trump's ability to gain the support of prominent Christian leaders and white evangelicals, saying: "The only time Donald went to church was when the cameras were there.

It's mind boggling. He has no principles. None!"

White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany slammed the book Tuesday, saying, "It's ridiculous, absurd accusations that have absolutely no bearing in truth."

Mary Trump traces much of her pain to the death of her father when she was 16. The president, who rarely admits mistakes, told The Washington Post last year that he regretted the pressure he and his father had put on Fred Jr. to join the family business when his brother wanted to be a pilot instead.

"It was just not his thing. ... I think the mistake that we made was we assumed that everybody would like it. That would be the biggest mistake. ... There was sort of a double pressure put on him," Trump told the paper.

Yet as her father lay dying alone, Mary Trump claims, "Donald went to the movies."

She says that, as a child, Donald Trump hid favorite toys from his younger brother and took juvenile stunts—like Fred Jr. dumping a bowl of mashed potatoes on his then-7-year-old head—so seriously that he harbored resentments even when his eldest sister, Maryanne, brought it up in her toast at his White House birthday dinner in 2017.

She paints Trump, who often called her "Honeybunch," as a self-centered narcissist who demanded constant adulation—even from his family—and had little regard for family members' feelings. Trump's crude rhetoric on the campaign trail, she said, was nothing new, reminding her "of every family meal I'd ever attended during which Donald had talked about all of the women he considered ugly fat slob or the men, usually more accomplished or powerful, he called losers."

The book is, at its heart, a lengthy psychoanalysis of the Trump family by a woman trained in the field, who sees the traits of her uncle that critics despise as a natural progression of behaviors developed at the knees of a demanding father. For Donald Trump, she writes, "lying was defensive—not simply a way to circumvent his father's disapproval or to avoid punishment ... but a way to survive."

Publisher Simon & Schuster announced Monday that it would be publishing the book two weeks early, on July 14, after a New York appellate court cleared the way for the book's publication following a legal challenge.

Robert Trump, the president's younger brother, had

sued Mary Trump, arguing in legal papers that she was subject to a 20-year-old agreement between family members that no one would publish accounts involving core family members without their approval.

A judge last week left in place a restraint that blocked Mary Trump and any agent of hers from distributing the book, but the court made clear it was not considering Simon & Schuster to be covered by the ruling.

In the book, Mary Trump writes that she didn't take her uncle's run for the presidency seriously in 2016—an opinion apparently shared by Trump's eldest sister, a retired federal appeals court judge.

"He's a clown," my aunt Maryanne said during one of our regular lunches at the time. "This will never happen," she recalls her saying.

She said she declined an invitation to attend her uncle's election-night party in New York City four years ago, convinced she "wouldn't be able to contain my euphoria when (Hillary) Clinton's victory was announced."

Instead, she found herself wandering around her house a few hours after Trump's victory was announced, fearful that voters "had chosen to turn this country into a macro version of my malignantly dysfunctional family."

Mary Trump wrote that she considered speaking out against her uncle at various times, including the summer of 2016, but was reluctant to do so for fear of being "painted as a disgruntled, disinherited niece looking to cash in or settle a score."

After the events of the last three years, she writes, "I can no longer remain silent."

At libel trial, Depp blasts Amber Heard's 'sick' abuse claim

LONDON (AP)—Johnny Depp said Tuesday that ex-wife Amber Heard had made "sick" claims of abuse and falsely branded him a monster, as the actor testified in a U.K. libel case that hinges on who was the aggressor in the celebrity couple's violent, toxic relationship.

Depp is suing British tabloid The Sun over an April 2018 story headlined "Potty - How can JK Rowling be 'genuinely happy' casting

wife beater Johnny Depp in the new Fantastic Beasts film?" The newspaper's lawyers plan to use Heard's allegations of abuse by Depp to defend the "wife beater" claim.

The "Pirates of the Caribbean" star strongly denies Heard's claims that he assaulted her during their tempestuous marriage, and is suing The Sun's publisher, News Group Newspapers, and its executive

editor, Dan Wootton.

"These sick claims are totally untrue," Depp said in a written witness statement, adding that Heard's allegations hurt his career and had "been a constant issue in my casting."

A three-week trial over his libel claims opened Tuesday at the High Court in London. It is one of the first major cases to be held in person since Britain began to lift its coronavirus lockdown.

New feelings for longtime friend are not reciprocated

DEAR ABBY: My longtime friend "Bonnie" and I have been reconnecting during COVID, mostly via text and video chatting. She's recently moved back to my area (she's in the military), so we spent a weekend together helping her move in. It was exhausting and stressful, and her drinking concerned me. I know drinking is prevalent in the military, and as a relatively high-ranking officer, she's under a lot of pressure all the time. I'm more aware of it because my sister is a recovering addict.

I'm a queer lady. Bonnie is gay, and over the last couple months I've been nursing a crush on her. She's very supportive of my artwork, and over the years has been the one doing the work to keep our friendship alive despite our lives going in different directions.

I told her I had a crush on her during the stressful moving weekend and asked her to please not tell me about all the girls she texts. She responded that she does not return those feelings for me. But we talk on the phone for hours at night, and she calls me "Baby" sometimes. She also tells me I'm sexually magnetic. Our lives are intertwined enough that both our parents think we're dating, and Bonnie frequently says things like, "My neighbor thinks we're dating."

How do I keep both our friendship and my sanity?

CRUSHING IN PENNSYLVANIA

DEAR CRUSHING: Regardless of what others might think, you and Bonnie are NOT dating, and she has told you plainly that she's not physically attracted to you. She was honest with you, I'll give her marks for that. Whether she's being completely honest with herself, however, is anyone's guess.

My advice is to stop allowing her to monopolize as much of your time as she has been. It isn't good for you because it keeps you from looking for a companion who can reciprocate your feelings. If you continue as things are, you will only subject yourself to more of the confusion you are feeling now.

DEAR ABBY: My wife of 46 years keeps telling me about her deprived childhood. Everybody else had a color TV; the one she grew up with was a black-and-white. Granny didn't have a dryer; she had to use a clothesline. They didn't have a car, and when they finally got one, it was a used car. Finally, they had a new car, but it was stolen two weeks later.

All the other girls had ballet lessons; all the other girls were in Brownies. When Granny finally signed her up, it was too late. My wife had to get a used Brownie uniform that didn't fit, and they put her in a troop with Girl Scouts much older. She always wanted a swing-set, but never got one.

Is there counseling and group therapy for this self-pity condi-

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



tion? I'm laughing to myself and my tears are getting into my beer.
HAD IT ROUGH, TOO

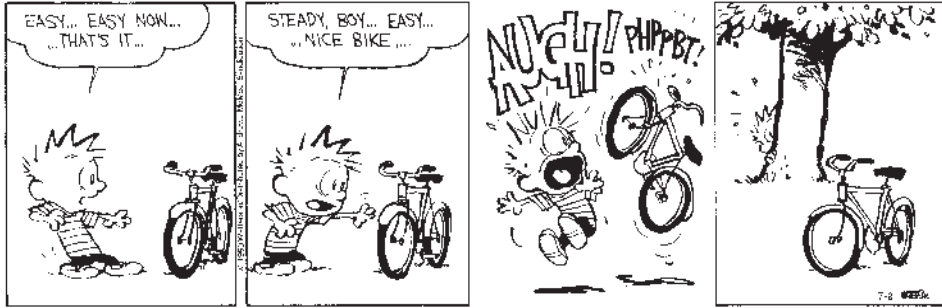
DEAR HAD IT: I would like to think your wife has it a lot better now, but to be married to someone as insensitive as you appear to be can hardly be an upper. Go pour yourself another pilsner before your tears dilute this one and bring you down further, Laughing Boy.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

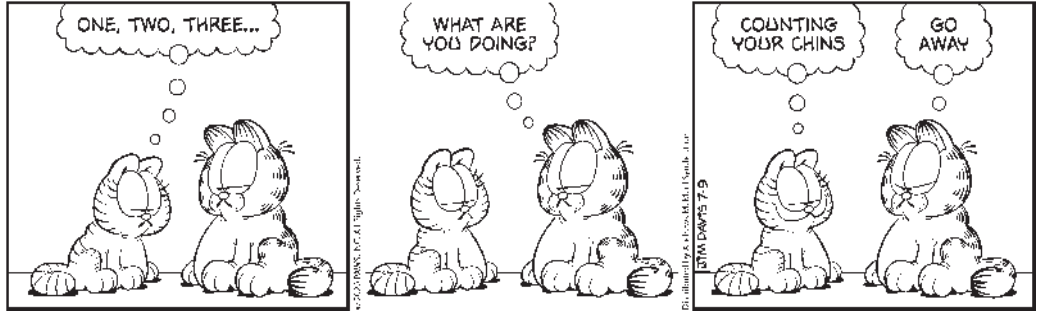
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis



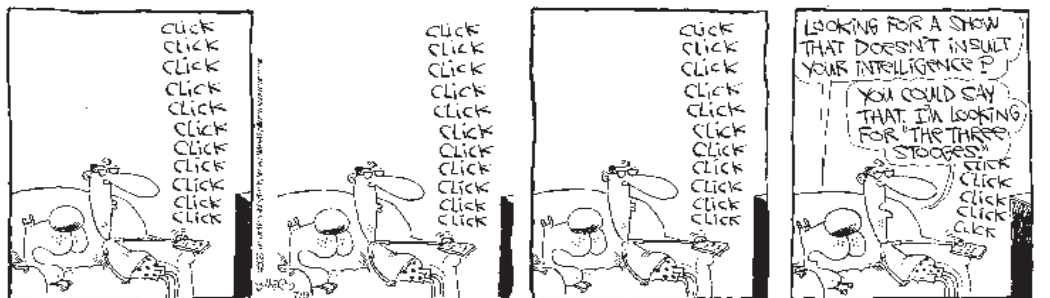
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Carson's predecessor
5 Curly cabbage
9 River blocker
12 Summit
13 "American —"
14 Pub order
15 Imaginary utopia
17 Candied veggie
18 Submitted by mail
19 "Frasier" pooch
21 Firefighter's need
22 Uproar
24 Scoundrels
27 Wee bit
28 Feeble
31 That girl
32 Egg (Pref.)
33 Mil. address
34 Twistable cookie
36 Heavy weight

DOWN

1 Cushions
2 Ranch
3 Prayer
4 Lariats
5 Pottery
6 Nabokov
7 Chaney
8 Church
9 Reverie
10 Jai
11 Viral phenomenon
16 Blend
20 Part of
22 Party gift
23 Japanese noodle
24 Comedian
25 — Lingus
26 Ideal
27 Dorothy's dog
29 Mimic
30 Decks in the ring
35 Globe
37 Frightens
39 Syrup
40 Succor
41 Wild guess
42 Shakespearean villain
43 Ms.
44 Astronaut
45 Poi base
46 Urban haze
49 Charged bit
50 Salary

Solution time: 24 mins.

Yesterday's answer 7-9

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Fred Savage, 44; Jack White, 45; Tom Hanks, 64; Jimmy Smits, 65.

Happy Birthday: Your sensitivity toward others will come in handy this year. Listen to your heart, and express the way you feel. Offering your thoughts and listening to the response you receive will help you develop a workable plan that will encourage healthier relationships with the people who count. Take the high road. Share your feelings, and be open to suggestions. Your numbers are 5, 17, 22, 28, 36, 39, 47.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Don't get bogged down with trivial matters, unnecessary arguments or other people's problems. Go about your business, and keep people at a distance. It's time to help yourself and associate with those who bring out the best in you. ***

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Stick to your plan, and finish what you start. A positive change is heading your direction; all you have to do is recognize and use what transpires to your benefit. If you snooze, you lose. Stay alert. ****

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Don't overreact or take on something that will make you look bad. Set your sights on what's doable and will inevitably help you present what you do best. Hone your skills, and you'll put an end to negative criticism. **

CANCER (June 21-July 22): A heart-to-heart talk will lead to workable solutions. Be reasonable and willing to compromise, and you will avoid getting into an unnecessary argument that will lead to an irreversible change. Look for the good in others, and offer your very best. *****

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Take a virtual tour of a place you'd like to explore. Join a social media group or master class to put you in touch with people who share your interests. Distance yourself from negative people. Arguing is a waste of time. ***

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Your suggestions will be well-received. Before negotiating, go over every detail to ensure you are getting what you want. Don't let an emotional issue cloud your vision. Be sensitive to others' needs, but be sure to get a fair deal. ***

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Don't get angry; get moving. If something doesn't go the way you want, pick yourself up and start over. Refuse to let other people's opinions or criticism get you down. Trust and believe in your abilities, and keep moving forward. ***

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Look into new possibilities. A change of pace or direction will be good for your morale and inspire you to revise some of the attributes you enjoy using to fit current economic trends. A unique idea you dream up will attract interest. *****

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Pull yourself together, and distance yourself from associates who don't give enough in return for the help and things you offer out of generosity. Shake things up, and concentrate on positive influences, people and the things you enjoy doing most. **

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You'll take a greater interest in the unknown. Science and the unfamiliar will pique your interest and lead you in a direction that is exciting and challenging. A lifestyle change will bring you closer to someone who shares your beliefs. ***

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Don't make a drastic or hasty change because someone else does. Pay closer attention to the things that make you happy, and adapt your daily routine to allow you more time to do something that brings you joy. ***

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Enjoy the people who offer the most in return. Set aside time to enrich your mind and to exercise enough discipline to reach your goals. Let your intuition guide you, and you will be happy with the results. ***

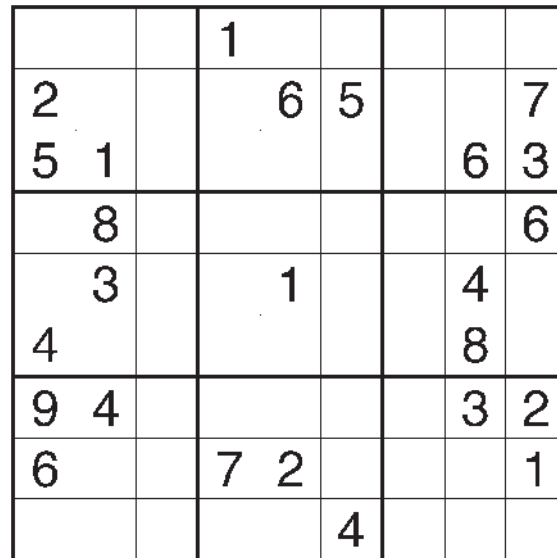
Birthday Baby: You are sensitive, caring and proactive. You are intelligent and persuasive.

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green



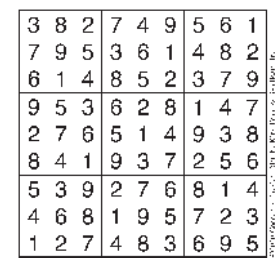
Difficulty Level ★★★

7/09

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer



Difficulty Level ★★★

7/9

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

ONLY A FEW SPOTS LEFT

Solution: 9 letters

SCHOOL KRAPLACES
UTDEENAPSSIMMPF
POABUSRTDRAIRLF
ELAE EEAIPETOAI
RLTSSLSLTRCGLMP
VAUSLNAUEUALEIE
IBUYINGERTSCTN
SREAIENGROPTIAEI
EORXESFEOVLRPVN
NTNATEARESEUSRG
ICCERRTSEDIRSES
MHREMSAPOSTSSSF
AENAAAREMAINEDER
XCRFCOUNTSECURE
EKEEPURCHASELLE

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Airplane, Allot, Buses, Buying, Check, Counts, Earmark, Examine, Extra, Fast, Fill, Flag, Free, Give, Keep, Label, Limit, Miss, Moderate, Need, Openings, Oversee, Park, Places, Posts, Pressure, Procure, Purchase, Reach, Reference, Register, Remained, Reserve, Rides, School, Seats, Secure, Sell, Space, Sports, Supervise, Surplus, Tag, Tally, Team, Time, Trains
Yesterday's Answer: Clubhouse
The NEW Treasury 39 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-800-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

‘Bubble’ bursts may shut down NBA season again



FLORIDA—NBA teams have begun flying to Orlando to restart the season at Disney World, where they will isolate for two days and undergo more coronavirus tests before playing again.

At that point, the NBA will hope it has set up a “bubble,” a concept endorsed by Dr. Anthony Fauci in which a league plays games in isolation to prevent players from being exposed to the virus.

Per ESPN, NBA commissioner Adam Silver said at a virtual conference that the league expects to see more coronavirus cases as teams arrive. If the league encounters more cases after that, though, the situation could apparently grow dire.

“We won’t be surprised when they first come down to Orlando if we have some additional players test positive,” Silver told Fortune Brainstorm Health. “What would be most concerning is once players enter this campus and then go through our quarantine period, then if they were to test positive or if we were to have any positive tests, we would know we would have an issue.”

“We would know that there’s, in essence, a hole in our bubble or that our quarantine or our campus is not working in some way,” Silver added later. “So that would be very concerning.”

Silver said any significant amount of positive cases inside the protected campus could result in a second shutdown of the NBA season.

That last sentence is obviously the NBA’s nightmare.

Just one coronavirus case could turn into dozens if a player enters a game not knowing he could transmit the coronavirus to other players, and dozens of cases would be more than enough to endanger the entire league. Ideally, a bubble league would prevent any players from contracting the virus, but, unfortunately, we already know the NBA’s Disney World setup won’t be a true bubble.

While NBA players, coaches and other staff will be staying on the Disney World campus until the end of their seasons, the Disney World employees cooking their meals, cleaning their rooms and doing everything else to support them will not.

And many of those employees live in some of the worst COVID-19 hot spots right now, according to the Orlando Sentinel

Of the 20 Central Florida ZIP codes with the most Disney workers represented by union Unite Here, half rank



In this Oct. 7, 2019 file photo, New Orleans Pelicans forward Zion Williamson (1) eludes the defense of Atlanta Hawks' Alex Len during the second half of a preseason NBA game in Atlanta.

in the region’s top 30 ZIPs for confirmed COVID-19 cases, an Orlando Sentinel analysis shows. More than 8,600 Disney workers live in those ZIP code areas.

Measures will reportedly be taken to minimize exposure between Disney employees and

the NBA, like masks, other protective equipment, social distancing, frequent cleaning and frequent testing. But all it takes is one leak to create a problem.

A number of NBA players have indicated they are preparing for the worst.

Portland Trail Blazers guard

Damian Lillard, New Orleans Pelicans forward Brandon Ingram and Philadelphia 76ers center Joel Embiid are all among the players skeptical of the NBA’s plan.

Embiid said he “hated” the idea, Ingram said he’s “not very confident” the NBA’s ex-

periment will work and Lillard doubted players would adhere to the NBA’s rules. Several more players have already opted out of the bubble, for varying reasons.

Beal, Dinwiddie out

Wizards leading scorer Brad-

ley Beal and Nets guard Spencer Dinwiddie won’t take part in the restart of the NBA season, two significant absences in the Eastern Conference playoff race.

Beal is out because of a right rotator cuff injury; Dinwiddie announced that he is still testing positive for coronavirus and won’t participate.

Washington, Orlando and Brooklyn are the three teams left in the chase for the final two playoff spots in the East. If the Wizards finish within four games of whichever club finishes eighth, then two games will be played to determine the No. 8 seed.

“He’s worked religiously to get this thing back to where it feels right, and it just hasn’t felt right,” said Wizards general manager Tommy Sheppard, who doesn’t believe Beal’s injury will linger long term or require surgery. “To hear him say himself that he’s just not right right now, I’ve got to keep working, I’ve got more work to do,” made that decision much easier.”

Washington will also be without forward Davis Bertans, who decided to opt out of playing as a pending free agent, and injured guard John Wall. With Beal and Bertans out, a Wizards team that has been without Wall all season will have to replace more than 40 points per game if it is to somehow get into that post-season mix.

“Going to Orlando is very important—it’s a very big opportunity—but would it make sense if we went there and Bradley’s injured?” Sheppard said. “Let’s say our next season starts in December, who’s to say he’s ready for next season? We’re trying to mitigate risk and give him the best opportunity to have a great year next year, which is better for him obviously, for us obviously big picture.”

Beal averaged 30.5 points a game this season, almost twice as much as Bertans, the Wizards’ No. 2 scorer. The 27-year-old was preparing to play, even while the decision was up in the air.

“I was loving my game this year and how I was playing towards the end of the year,” Beal said last week. “It’s more or less going to be a decision that comes down to the medical staff and I, just because of our precautions and just coming back from being zero to 100.” (AP/NBC)

MLS to resume season minus 1 team amid growing virus concern



NEW YORK (AP)—Major League Soccer is about to resume its season—in a state that has seen a huge spike in coronavirus infections, with one team absent because of a COVID-19 outbreak, and with plenty of worry about what will happen next.

The MLS is Back tournament starts Wednesday in Florida. The league’s teams are sequestered in resorts for the duration of the World Cup-style tournament, which will be played without fans at ESPN’s Wide World of Sports complex at Walt Disney World.

FC Dallas withdrew from the tournament on Monday after 10 players and a coach tested positive for the virus. On Tuesday, Nashville SC’s status was thrown into doubt with five confirmed positive tests.

“It’s a strange time, because on one hand you’re focused to get ready for this tournament, and get pumped

up and get excited about it because the tournament sounds a lot of fun, World Cup-style,” Real Salt Lake veteran Kyle Beckerman said. “But then on the other hand you’re thinking, ‘Is this even going to happen?’ So there’s mixed emotions going on.”

Dallas coach Luchi Gonzalez spoke to reporters on Tuesday, a day after the team withdrew from the event. He said players felt hurt and hopeless in the moment—but they also knew there was going to be risk.

“I don’t think there was going to be a right or wrong moment (for the tournament). I think it needed to happen and there’s no regrets,” Gonzalez said. “I’m not sorry I’m having this experience with these players, because I know it’s a good learning lesson for the league, for the game and for all the other teams.”

The tournament kicks off with a match between Orlando City and expansion In-

ter Miami, a nod to the host state. Nashville was supposed to play Chicago in the second game on Wednesday night, but it has been postponed.

Additionally, Toronto FC’s opening game against D.C. United was moved from Friday evening to Sunday morning. Toronto was supposed to depart on Friday, but additional testing meant the Reds didn’t arrive until Monday.

MLS shut down because of the coronavirus pandemic on March 12, after the league’s teams had each played two regular-season games.

Commissioner Don Garber said that despite the disappointment about Dallas, the case shows that the league’s extensive testing in its so-called bubble is working.

“We knew when we created this tournament that we would experience some impact of some of the coronavirus,” Garber told The Associated Press. “We’re all learning to live with COVID-19 and to

adapt to the pandemic and to ensure that we’re taking care of each other and taking care of ourselves and following the health and safety protocols as closely as possible. We also knew that when we launched this tournament, there would be an element of risk.”

Also troubling are the rising cases in Florida. On Tuesday, the state reported 7,347 new infections and 380 new hospitalizations.

Portland Timbers coach Giovanni Savarese said it’s important to be vigilant.

“I think MLS has worked very hard to try to create a safe environment,” Savarese said. “But nevertheless, we still have to continue to make sure that we take always as a priority the health of the players, and making sure that they’re safe.”

Meanwhile, LAFC captain and reigning league MVP Carlos Vela opted out of the tournament, choosing to remain home with his pregnant wife and their young son.

More positive tests, canceled workouts add to MLB unease



NEW YORK
(AP) — A s

baseball nears the two-week countdown to the start of its delayed season, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to keep more players, including Boston Red Sox projected opening day starter Eduardo Rodriguez, off the field.

On Tuesday, one day after Major League Baseball released its 60-game schedule, there was continued evidence of the difficulties caused by the pandemic.

The San Francisco Giants suspended workouts at Oracle Park as they awaited the results of weekend tests for the coronavirus. The Chicago Cubs' workout was delayed.

Oakland left-hander Jake Diekmann, who has ulcerative colitis, an autoimmune condition, said teams having to call off workouts because of delays in test results "just can't happen."

"I know they're trying their hardest, but I don't know if that's good enough for right now," Diekmann said Tuesday. "It's a little worrisome. Say we go on a 10-day road trip and we only get results one time. That's not very good with 45 or 50 people in a clubhouse at one time."

Giants manager Gabe Kapler said one missed day wouldn't put his club behind. He said he expects the testing process to improve.

"I feel as confident today as I did yesterday," Kapler said. "I understand that there are going to be hiccups along the way. ... I think more than anything I just maintain a level of empathy for everybody that's working really hard to get our camp up and running but also across the league and for all the clubs that are working really hard to put their players in a position to have success. Nobody expected this to be easy and everybody is doing the best that they can."

The Giants already have had prospect Hunter Bishop and pitcher Luis Madero test positive.

Rodriguez, who broke out in 2019 as a star, and Red Sox prospect Bobby Dalbec tested positive for the virus.

Rodriguez had not reported to camp after informing the team that he had been around relatives who had been ill. Dalbec, a third baseman, also is home and is asymptomatic.

Manager Ron Roenicke said it is "just unfortunate" the positive test could jeopardize Rodriguez's chances to start on opening day. Rodriguez had career-best numbers with 19 wins and a 3.81 ERA in 2019.

Also, the Kansas City Royals announced right-hander Brad Keller and first base-



AP
Houston Astros first baseman Yuli Gurriel runs through a drill during a baseball practice at Minute Maid Park, Sunday, July 5, 2020, in Houston.

cause of testing delays.

"They're still trying to iron out the bugs," Astros manager Dusty Baker said. "No one's happy about it—the players, the MLB, probably the testing site. But the tests came back today, and we were able to work."

Some Washington players did not take part in workouts, including Starlin Castro, Juan Soto, Howie Kendrick and Victor Robles. General manager Mike Rizzo said two unidentified players tested positive for the coronavirus. Any players and staff who came into contact with the two players had to be re-tested.

"Several of those players that you mentioned beyond the two positive tests have tested negative in their intake test, but if you come into any type of contact with a player that is positive—and we cast a real wide net of being in contact -- (then) you have to be re-tested," Rizzo said. "Those players were re-tested a couple days ago, and we're waiting on the results on a group of those players."

Braves manager Brian Snitker, eager for a quiet day, embraced "our first normal feel day since we've been back."

Four Atlanta players, including first baseman Freddie Freeman and one of the team's top relievers, Will Smith, have tested positive. Two veterans, outfielder Nick Markakis and right-hander Felix Hernandez, have decided to sit out the season.

On Tuesday, Snitker had his first chance to address his full squad at Truist Park as he made plans for a situational scrimmage on Wednesday and the team's first intrasquad game on Monday. Before Tuesday, only small groups had been on the field as the team practiced social distancing.

"I told the guys I've never felt so detached from the team in all my life because we've been here, there and everywhere," Snitker said. "I feel like today is the start of something that we're all kind of getting back in the swing of these things."

Among Braves pitchers scheduled to throw on Wednesday are Mike Soroka, Max Fried, Josh Tomlin and Shane Greene.

The Baltimore Orioles will play their first intrasquad game on Wednesday night at Camden Yards. Left-hander Tommy Milone and right-hander Tom Eshelman will start in the game, which is scheduled for 7 1/2 innings.

man Ryan O'Hearn had positive tests and gave the team permission to announce the results.

Keller, 24, said he has "minor symptoms that remind me more of an allergy attack."

The threat of an infection was enough for the Cleveland Indians to keep outfielder Franmil Reyes away from camp. Reyes was told to stay home after he was seen on social media attending a weekend holiday party without

wearing a mask.

It was an example that off-field activities can affect a player's status.

Manager Terry Francona said Reyes would be re-tested "when it's appropriate."

Francona said Reyes could have exposed himself and his teammates to the virus by not practicing social distancing or wearing a mask. Francona said he has used the incident as a teaching point for other players. He said Reyes has

apologized.

"This is not to poke at Franmil," Francona said, adding Reyes is "a wonderful kid and I don't ever want that to be disputed. But we have gone around to the other players and talked to them about it."

The Cubs' workout was delayed a few hours as the team awaited test results. On Monday, Cubs slugger Kris Bryant criticized the lack of frequency of the tests and delays in getting results.

Manager David Ross said Tuesday's delay "isn't a huge deal" and seemed bigger "with what's been going on with some teams the last day or so."

"We can't just crush MLB because this is new to them, too, and the testing facility," Ross said.

The two teams from last year's World Series, the champion Washington Nationals and the Houston Astros, resumed workouts after canceling practices on Monday be-

Mets to host Yankees on 20th anniversary of 9/11

NEW YORK (AP)—The New York Mets will host the crosstown Yankees on the 20th anniversary of 9/11 next season, according to a person familiar with the decision.

The clubs will play at Citi Field in a game sure to be full of emotions for the city that's also reported over 18,000 confirmed coronavirus deaths this year. The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because Major League Baseball has not yet released next season's schedule.

"I can't imagine how powerful and how emotional of an event that could be," Yankees manager Aaron Boone said.

The 20th anniversary game will be played not far from the site of demolished Shea Stadium, where Hall of Famer Mike Piazza hit a memo-

rable home run for the Mets against the Braves on Sept. 21, 2001 in the first major sporting event in the city following the attacks. New York wore hats honoring the city's first responders for the game.

Mets slugger Pete Alonso is sure to have a hand in the planning.

The 25-year-old reigning NL Rookie of the Year side-stepped MLB rules to create customized cleats for all of his teammates honoring 9/11 victims and first responders for New York's home game last Sept. 11. Alonso later donated his spikes to the National September 11 Memorial & Museum.

The Yankees and Mets won't have to wait that long to see each other. The teams announced Tuesday they will play preseason exhibition

games July 18 at Citi Field and July 19 at Yankee Stadium as they prepare for the start of a pandemic-shortened 60-game regular season.

The Yankees will start the season against the World Series champion Nationals in Washington on July 23—the first game of the year for any team. The Dodgers and Giants will play later that night, and the rest of the league will open the next day.

Ohtani returns

Shohei Ohtani threw competitive pitches off the mound at Angel Stadium on Tuesday for the first time in two years.

Ohtani struggled with his control in the Los Angeles Angels' intrasquad game, walking eight batters on about 50 pitches. The two-way star and manager Joe

Maddon weren't overly concerned about the results of another key day in Ohtani's return from Tommy John surgery.

"I was able to throw all my pitches today, so I'm just going to try to build on that," Ohtani said through a translator. "Obviously it felt a lot different from my bullpens, especially because I was unfamiliar with pitching to my teammates. That kind of threw me off a little bit."

Ohtani hadn't pitched at the Big A since June 9, 2018, when he left a game with what was initially called a blister. Ohtani was shut down as a pitcher for three months, and the AL Rookie of the Year only returned for one outing in September before it was determined he needed elbow surgery.

NFL wants 35% of players' salaries put in escrow

NEW YORK—The NFL has been deliberately slow in confronting the idea of a canceled or highly modified season due to the coronavirus pandemic, but some details of the league's talks with its players union over the possibility is starting to leak out.

So far, the NFLPA isn't liking what it's hearing.

The NFLPA informed its board of representatives on Tuesday that the NFL had proposed 35% of player salaries in 2020 be held in escrow to help manage costs for the season, according to NFL Network's Tom Pelissero. Basically, the league wants to hold back a sizable chunk of player salaries in anticipation of decreased revenues to some or all teams being unable to allow fans into games.

The union's reaction to the proposal wasn't very welcoming, according to an executive.



It's not hard to understand why players would react to the idea in such fashion. NFL

owners have raked in profits and seen their franchise values skyrocket into the billions for years with player pay lagging behind. Now, the league wants the players to help absorb its losses the one year it might not be profitable, and in a season in which they will face the dangers of a pandemic.

More players reacted to the news of the proposal on Twitter, and their universal rejection and derision of the idea indicates the idea probably isn't going to get much traction.

Unresolved camp protocols

The NFL and the NFLPA also haven't come to an agreement on all protocols for training camp and the preseason as the

report date for teams draws closer.

The two sides finalized the protocols regarding team travel, media, and treatment response, and have also updated the facilities protocol to specifically address training camp based on recommendations from a joint committee of doctors, trainers and strength coaches formed by the league and players' union.

The league sent a 42-page memo to teams last Friday outlining those proposals. But the NFL Players Association and its president, Cleveland Browns center JC Tretter, say testing and the number of preseason games remain unresolved.

"Our normal return date for training camp is quickly approaching and we are still

far from back to 'normal,'" Tretter wrote in a letter on the union's website.

"Our main concern is player safety, both in regard to preventing the virus' transmission as well as preventing injuries after an extended and historically unique layoff."

Tretter reiterated that players don't want to play any preseason games and want a 48-day training camp schedule to give them more time to prepare for the season and avoid injuries. He cited an increase in injuries following the 2011 lockout.

The league last week decided to cut the preseason schedule from four games to two and pushed back the start of exhibition play an extra week to give teams more time to prepare because the coronavi-

The National Football League has proposed that 35% of player salaries in 2020 be held in escrow to help manage costs for the season-marred by the COVID-19 pandemic.

rus pandemic forced the cancellation of on-field workouts.

The league previously requested that players report to camp earlier than July 28 to give them more acclimation time for strength and conditioning because they held no formal workouts or team minicamps. But the union declined.

"When we asked for a medical reason to play games that don't count in the standings during an ongoing pandemic, the NFL failed to provide one," Tretter wrote.

A league official told The Associated Press that Tretter's comments were "disheartening" to read because "we've been working in good faith."

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the league doesn't want to engage in a public dispute similar to the contentious discussions between Major League Baseball and its players' union.

"It's not constructive. We'd rather do this face to face," the person said. "The committee understood the utility of playing one or two preseason games to get players ready for game-day conditions, which you can't simulate playing against yourselves, and also to practice the protocols. We will continue working together."

TRAC

From Page 20

Meanwhile, TRAC member Mark Isip is leading the 300-mile bike event of Urban Fitness Guam's Go The Distance Challenge.

Isip did not only complete the challenge just five days into the event, but he has even surpassed the set mileage, as he logged 314.27 miles from July 1 to 5. He led the men's division, while Guam's Belen Sidell is ahead in the women's category after posting 85.34 miles. Sidell is also on top of the swim challenges, having swam for seven hours and seven min-

utes, while David Burns, also from Guam, paces the men's division with his four hours and 46 minutes.

The challenge, which also features 50-mile walk, 30-mile swim, and 100-mile run, drew around 40 participants from Saipan—majority of them are TRAC members. Challengers are given a month to complete one of the events or three (Ultimate Challenge) and mileage are logged via Strava App.

In the run portion, Guam's Laurene Mechelle (women's) and Terry Miller (men's) are the leaders after recording 59.91 miles and 48.49 miles, respectively for five days.

WANTED

From Page 20

Tebuteb and OAA president and NMA secretary general Robin Samong participated in

World Athletics Member Federations Info Sessions online yesterday.

The virtual meeting was led by no less than World Athletics president and International

Olympic Committee member Sebastian Coe. The online session, which had Pinsent Masons chief commercial officer Dalton Odendaal as resource speaker, discussed structuring

sponsorship programs and how to deal with postponement and cancellation of events due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

World Athletics and its member-associations, like

OAA, have been holding a series of virtual meeting since the athletics community and the rest of the world have been crippled by the COVID-19 pandemic. Training tips, event

management, and coaching insights are shared to World Athletics membership to keep federations on track of their respective programs. **(Roselyn B. Monroyo)**



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The CNMI's Oldie Roligat competes in the long jump event in the 2019 Oceania Athletics Championships.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Competition officials are on top of the 110m hurdle events in the 2019 Oceania Athletics Championships at the Townsville Sports Reserve in Queensland, Australia.



'Bubble'
bursts may
shut down NBA
season again

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Saipan Tribune Sports

More positive
tests, canceled
workouts add
to MLB unease

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

20 THURSDAY, JULY 9, 2020

TRAC, PSS to work on school tri events

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

With the Public School System considering offering alternative sports events for the safety of the students and other stakeholders amid this COVID-19 pandemic, it has reached out to the Triathlon Association of the CNMI to coordinate future competitions.



PSS Athletic Program director Nick

Gross had earlier announced that until a vaccine for COVID-19 is made available, they will have to stay away from "traditional sports" (group sports in particular like basketball and volleyball) for the first semester of the upcoming school year. Triathlon is one of the sports the PSS Athletic Department is considering to replace group sports and



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Two student-athletes may have a chance to compete in duathlon this year, as the Public School System Athletics Department and Triathlon Association of the CNMI will be working together to safely hold races.

Gross has started the ball rolling to make things happen for student-athletes despite these challenging times.

Gross has suggested that TRAC develop a proposal on holding an event, possibly, duathlon, with emphasis on ensuring the safety of the students, coaches, and others involved in the program. PSS Athletic Program director added that the duathlon or even triathlon will be offered to middle and high school students.

In response, TRAC, through its secretary general Ricky Castro, furnished Gross a copy of the safety guidelines that USA Triathlon and the International Triathlon Union formulated and issued to member-federations wishing to resume competition or training amid this pandemic.

TRAC, based on the guidelines, is engaged only in virtual events for now and will make decisions once it's safe to do races and when both the local and federal governments have also given clearances to sports groups.

The CNMI triathlon federation added that it will definitely work with PSS for a program that is tailored to the students' needs and will protect the welfare and safety of everyone involved in the event.

See TRAC on Page 19

Competition officials in athletics wanted

Oceania Athletics Association is looking for individuals who will make up the OAA Competition Commission.

Chaired by New Zealand's Trevor Spittle, the Competition Commission was established to replace the OAA Technical Commission and Cross-Country Committee. OAA has called on its member-federations, which include the CNMI, and the people involved in their respective programs to submit an Expression of Interest to join the new commission.

OAA is looking to have a minimum of five and more than seven individuals to run the Competition Commission. The association said the commission's officials will be tasked to recommend to

OAA format, qualifications, programs, and organizations of international competitions under the region.

The commission will also work on implementing technical and operational standards in the tournaments that are part of the Oceania's calendar. Those who will be appointed to the commission will serve on the group until the next OAA Election Congress that will be held in 2023.

Interested individuals have until July 17 to submit their Expression of Interest.

NMA attends World Athletics virtual meeting

Meanwhile, Northern Marianas Athletics president Ray

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The CNMI flag is on display along with the other island-nations' during the athletics competition in last year's Pacific Games in Apia, Samoa.

